P. o. angl.
249
Rc-3

6 P. O. angl.

249 hc — 3

Morgan

(Lady)

<36628360920019

<36628360920019

Bayer. Staatsbibliothek

HEIDELBERG:

AND O. SULZER AND SON, 9, ARGYLE-ST. LONDON.

1838.

THE

O'BRIENS

AND THE

O'FLAHERTYS.

A NATIONAL TALE.

BY LADY MORGAN.

„A Plaquē o'both your Houses!"

SHAKSPEARE.

„Je me suis enquis au mielx que j'ai sçeu et pu; et je certifie à touts que ne l'ay fait ny pour or, ny pour argent, ny pour sallaire, ny pour compte à faire qui soit, ny homme ny femme qui vescut: ne voulant ainsi favoriser ny blamer nul à mon pouvoir fors seulement déclarer les choses advenues."

DU CLERCQ — *Préface des Chroni ques*

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

HEIDELBERG:

PRINTED BY JOSEPH ENGELMANN.

1828.

Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München

Bayerische
Staatsbibliothek
München

THE O'BRIENS AND THE O'FLAHERTYS.

CHAPTER I.

TRINITY COLLEGE.

Quel est donc l'objet de vos collèges, de vos académies, de tant de fondations savantes? Est-ce de donner le change au peuple, d'altérer d'avance sa raison, de l'empêcher d'aller au vrai?

ROUSSEAU, *Lettre à Mons. de Beaumont.*

AMONG the penal clauses, which filled the Irish statute book from the period of the revolution, the most effective in degrading the people of all ranks, were the laws against education. Reading and writing were the peculiar privilege of protestantism: and he who had not given up transubstantiation and the infallibility of the Pope, had but little chance of enjoying the delectable adventures of Renard the Fox, or of imitating the heroism of Don Bellianis of Greece and the Seven Champions of Christendom. While the first elements of learning were

thus jealously withheld from the Catholic people, it is not surprising that the higher branches of science, the pathways to professional eminence, were still more rigorously guarded; and that the Gates of the Irish University were hermetically sealed against all, save the sons of ascendancy.

The young members of the great emporium of church and state prerogative, high in the conscious privileges of their caste, were, by their very position, little likely to submit to the restraints of a rigorous discipline; and the advanced age at which they were then accustomed to matriculate, did not tend to increase their subordination. At that period the road to reason was long and circuitous; there were no short cuts and by-ways to the learned languages; and the venerable college of the capital received no „boyish troops in unhaired sauciness," under her owlet wings. No pert precocity then started from her halls and classes, well stocked with poetry and pastry, with genius and gingerbread. No minor poets wrote Odes to Phoebus or to Dolly, which afterwards could come forth to shame the prosaic wisdom, that had removed their authors from the grottos of Helicon, to the stalls of a cathedral. On the contrary, the students of the Irish University, some fifty years ago, came fresh from the rack-rent castles of their bashaw fathers, in the first burst of manhood.

Full of restless energy, with passions awakened, and habits of turbulence formed, they were from their entrance better

Versed in the rudiments
Of many a desperate study,

than in those sedentary pursuits which cool the blood, „and preach the pulse to temper." Leaders in every civil broil which disturbed the badly policed capital; dictators in the street, and umpires in the theatre, they were popular with the populace whom they resembled, and feared by the citizens whom they annoyed. But, like the young scions of modern jesuitism on the continent, they formed a „*jeunesse bien pensant.*" Though violating the laws, they upheld the Constitution; though breaking the king's peace, they fought staunchly for his crown and dignity; and though public disturbers of social order, and private violators of domestic happiness, they acted under the especial protection of the church, as by law established.

Still the University of Dublin, the *Collegium Sanctae et individuae Trinitatis*," was then, as now, a good old monkish and venerable institution. Founded in those semi-papistical times, when the reformation (which, as a great divine has lately declared, is only now beginning to take effect), was but a word; and erected upon the model of other institutions which sprang up under the full influence of popery, it still

performed all those forms, laws, canons, and customs, which were as purely monastic, as those of any Jesuit or Dominican seminary in France or Spain. The students, for whatever profession designed, were supposed to lead the lives of the „*fratri*" of a foreign convent; and whoever beheld them in their white sacerdotal surplices, with their strongly marked Irish faces, well set off with demurely smoothed bands, celebrating their matins, vespers, or high mass done into English, in their old popish-looking chapel, might have mistaken these scions of protestant ascendancy, for the officiating „*clerici*" of an Italian Duomo, or the robust brotherhood of the Irish friary at the „*Pace*" of Rome; where the „*lingua Toscana*," and the brogue of Tipperary are still cultivated with equal assiduity and equal success.

Towards the latter end of the last century, the opening of the university to catholics, and dissenters, and still more, the diffusion of political knowledge and public spirit through the bloodless revolution of eighty-two, produced their ennobling effects, even within the walls of the strong-hold of all ancient institutes. The spirit of the „Trinity boys," as they were fondly and familiarly called by the people, was then not less buoyant and vigorous, than that of their restive and restless predecessors: but it took a higher and a better direction,

consonant to that greatest and best epoch of Irish story. The sparkling effervescence of the Irish temperament no longer evaporated in unprofitable ardors and ignoble contentions: and to how great an extent patriotism and science profited by the kindling of energies so fresh, and the concentration of powers so unworn, the lives and works, the eloquence and the actions of the Avonmores and the Youngs, * the Grattans and the Currans, afford abundant testimony and proof. Never did any country give to the world a more splendid, or more intellectual generation, than that which now burst forth to illustrate the benefits of political independence; and to prove the superiority of the age, that was dawning in the light of truth and liberality, over that which was setting in the darkness of bigotry and intolerance. A spirit was abroad, which gave to senility the vital energies of youth; and to youth the high aspiration and pertinacity of purpose of vigorous manhood. Learning raised her head from the study of useless abstraction, to catch the rising light. The historical society was established: and if national and youthful vanity found their account in the opportunities it afforded for ambitious display, if taste and judgment sometimes shrank from the ebullitions of over-excited genius, still that splendid association of youthful, fervid, and honest hearts,

---

* Dr Young, Bishop of Clonfert.

which nurtured the national talent of eloquence and fostered the national spirit, was a benefaction to the country. In the dreary interval that has succeeded its dissolution, the genius, which was the sole distinction of the country—the solitary attribute which tyranny had not quenched—has sickened in the cells of „the silent sister;" and subserviency and hypocrisy have been made the profitable substitutes for patriotism and talent.

The canons of Elizabeth were now of little avail against the spirit of the age. Swift and Molyneux were again read with avidity. Locke was not yet banished from the course of collegiate instruction. Curran, Yelverton, Grattan, Flood, Burgh, and Ponsonby, had but recently come from the meditation of their philosophical, hardy, and convincing pages; and were already shedding a glory, which effaced the memory of that dulness, that had expelled the creator of Gulliver, and had rejected the poet of Auburn. The „Monks of the Screw," who in the midst of their classic festivities, mingled mirth with wisdom, and gave to political philosophy the charm of eloquence, and the lustre of wit,—the Monks of the Screw had long left to other monks the gravity which is the talent of mediocrity, and the cant which is the eloquence of hypocrisy. Though some embryo Boulters and Stones were then crawling in the lowest walks of collegiate

service, to attain the church's diadem, which they have since worn with such unchristian despotism; the youth of the Irish University, for the most part, followed emulously in the luminous track of their unrivalled predecessors: and men not less highly endowed, though less fortunate in their epoch, trod closely in the steps of those destined to fill a brighter, but not a more honourable page in the history of their country.

Among these juvenile aspirants for honest fame, these enthusiasts for national regeneration, the Honourable Murrogh O'Brien stood pre-eminent, as one whose unguarded frankness, buoyant spirit, and popular endowments had rendered him a subject of notoriety, from the first record of his name upon the College books. He was, indeed, the very *beau idéal* of the French and the Irish youth, who, in many important particulars, so closely resemble each other. There was, too, a brilliant, but unlucky, adaptation of his qualities, principles, and acquirements to the then reigning opinions in Ireland, which constituted him at once a leader of that portion of the students who had enlisted themselves in the popular cause: and an accidental, or an affected, resemblance to the style of Mirabeau, in his rhetorical orations at the Historical Society, had obtained him much vogue amongst his fellow students; while his military skill in

the volunteer corps, which he had materially assisted in raising, had equally distinguished him among the members of the great national army.

He had thus become the subject of especial suspicion and vigilant observation to the chiefs of the university; and he had been more than once *cautioned* as to his mode of treating the subjects discussed at that society, which, like himself, had already begun to „*devancer son siècle.*“

The Historical Society of the Irish University, in its origin, and before it had attained to its high eminence, was but a mere ordinary debating club. No exception had been taken to it as long as its members confined themselves to mooting the Irish rebellion, the gun-powder plot, the restoration of his sacred majesty King Charles the Second, and such other themes as had been handed down traditionally from some archetypal exercises of church and state eloquence. Thus conducted, the institution was rather cherished than feared; as being (under the cover of a desirable exercise of the intellect) a hot-bed of servility, and a school for time-servingness. But when, awaking from the lethargy of a stultifying despotism, the youth of Ireland, and of her university, began to think, to feel, to speak, and even to write — when they took for their discussions the real subject of national interest,

a reform of the representation, and the emancipation of the catholics, then a sort of inquisition, or Star Chamber, was erected within the College walls, and the free course of debate was checked by cautions, threats, rustication, and the loss of all collegiate caste, expulsion.*

While such a spirit was called forth in the councils of the university, and was strengthened and authorished by its Vice-Chancellor, many of its younger members furnished too many favourable pretexts for the exercise of its power: for they were imprudent (as the uncompromising and honest always are), and impetuous (as the ardent and the young cannot fail to be). Visitations, followed by censures and punishments, were frequent. Even a fellow of the College, one of the most enlightened and learned of its members, was threatened with a suspension (which was afterwards put in force), for opinions purely theoretical; while the disgrace of expulsion was held *in terrorem*, though upon what devoted head it was to fall was still a mystery.

---

* «Armed,» says a writer of the day, «with the doctrine of libel, the great engine of oppression in all despotisms, you have invaded the student in his cell; and the subtlety of a Spanish inquisition has been employed to ensnare the artlessness of youth, and to draw generous simplicity into self crimination.»

Such was the moral condition of the Irish University, when Murrogh O'Brien was about to incur its censures, for a conduct, that whatever might be its errors, would, twenty years before, have been passed over in silence; as one of those juvenile „ frolics, done at the heat of blood," which then nightly disturbed the streets of the Irish capital.

O'Brien, on his return to College, after two days' absence, crossed its threshold with a heavy aud foreboding heart. Lighted by one of the porters, who accompanied him from the lodge to his own chambers in the library square (which looked from their rear into the park), he found them chill and comfortless — almost as desolate as that he had lately occupied in his paternal home. The porter, too, who only staid to light his candle, was churlish and surly; and treated him as one who was already under the ban of that empire, which was to its underlings — the world. In answer to O'Brien's question for letters or notes (for he was anxious and full of expectation as to his father), the man replied sullenly, that he believed there were both messages and letters, but that it was then too late to send them up from the lodge, and that the fire-lighter would bring them in the morning. He then retired; and O'Brien worn out in mind and body, stiff with protracted fatigue, and the bruises he had received among the falling ruins, and chilled

with the drenching rain, under which he had so long been exposed, retired to his little dormitory in utter despondency, and wholly deficient in those physical energies, from which spring the pleased alacrity of spirits and cheering aspirations of hope.

It was late when he rose on the following morning; so late, that he missed the chapel service, as he necessarily had done on the preceding day — another item in the long account which college discipline had to settle with him. As he entered his sitting-room, he found his breakfast table covered with cards, notes, and letters. There is in such mementos of friendly recollection something peculiarly cheering to spirits depressed with the consciousness of isolation. The certainty of being thought of, in the moment when some especial stroke of life's vicissitudes leads to the apprehension of a general abandonment, was gracious and gratifying. It was a solace he needed; for he was still steeped in thought from visions of the night — from adventures, at least, which might pass for visions. Intense solicitude concerning the mysterious absence of his father, at a moment so critical to his only child — anxiety for the fate of Shane — the utter ruin of his father's fortunes — and last, though scarcely least, the agitating and doubtful impression left on his mind, by the sudden apparition of that female phantom, standing on the brink of des-

truction, amidst the ruins of the falling house — all combined to sink his susceptible spirits to the lowest pitch of depression. He gladly, therefore, took refuge from himself in externals, and was disposed to see, in the common forms of good-will, more of courtesy and of kindness than might even have been intended.

The visiting cards included the names of the most distinguished members of the Historical Society, some of whom had called on him, the day before, at the castle guard. There was also a letter written on coarse paper, coarsely folded, and sealed with a thimble. A slight flush coloured his pale cheek, as he threw the letter carelessly and unopened on one side: he was not wholly unused to receive letters sealed with thimbles. In the present instance, however, he could not tax himself even with a guess at the probable writer; and he threw aside the letter, and took up another of larger dimensions, and more courtly form, which was sealed with a coronet. His faint blush deepened to crimson; and he tore open the aristocratic missive with a trembling hand. It was a blank cover, containing a card for a masked ball of Knocklofty House, on the following evening — a mandate evidently issued from the office of the countess's groom of the chambers; and his name had probably been set down with the sweepings of the porter's book.

O'Brien was disappointed, he knew not why

He looked at the inclosure. The address was in a large hand; but the seal was the Knock-lofty arms. There was the pearl in a field or, and the motto of „ *Qui me cherche, me trouve.*" The recollection of the interview in St Patrick's Hall, the exchange of the precious and elegant ring for the awful signet he still wore on his finger, recurred to his recollection, and wholly absorbed him, as he swallowed his coffee.

Gradually kindling under the cheering influence, he took up another note; having first, however, cut off the Knocklofty seal, and deposited it in his writing box. This note had lain concealed under the enveloppe of the Knocklofty invitation. It looked like a billet from the queen of the fairies. It was written on rose-coloured paper, and bore the fragrance of the flower whose tints it imitated. Its tiny seal was impressed with the head of a veiled Isis; and the spirit of the billet appeared, to his heated fancy, as pretty as its *matériel.* It was headed „L'invito," and ran as follows: —

If there be truth in eyes, I've read in thine
  More than by words or breath could e'er transpire,
A soul in sacred sympathy with mine,
  And I'm a spirit of no common fire.
To-morrow's eve — remember, ten's the hour —
  Come, if hope, feeling, passion, warm thy breast;
A mask, *en rose*, a ring, a wreath, a flower —
  These are the sings — so leave to fate the rest.

O'Brien read over the billet a hundred times.

Its contents, like its odours, were intoxicating; and its odour was so peculiar, as to breathe even upon his mental associations. It was an odour peculiar to the musky atmosphere of the Arno. A small phial, which lay in his writing box, was filled with the same distillation, the secret of which was only known to the monks of the *Santa Maria Novella*, of Florence; from whose „*fonderia*" of pious perfumery, it was sent forth, — for the emolument of the convent, and the delicious inebriation of all who partook of their hallowed essence of „*Mille fiori.*"

But whence came this pretty note and its perfume? Its fantastic contents, its seducing invitation, were assigned, with a rapid heart-beat, to Lady Knocklofty. O'Brien was perhaps vain and impassioned, with just enough of the coxcomb to misdirect a susceptibility, always on service: but it was scarcely necessary to be either, to suspect that the prepossession of the beautiful countess, in favour of her champion, had taken a colour, of a deeper dye than that which gratitude sheds even on the most grateful feelings. O'Brien had all the sense of moral propriety which belongs to superior minds, and all that high feeling of honour, which a chivalrous profession and character combine to form and to nurture. But there are frailties incidental to the young and the ardent, which (however they may tend to

violate the best interests of society), come in such an illusory guise, as to conceal their real turpitude from their victim; and which society itself appears, by a sort of tacit agreement, to view, not with approbation, but with pity and indulgence.

To have conceived, to have cherished a passion for a married woman, would never have entered into the moral abstractions of one, who, even with all his foreign habits of viewing certain *liaisons* (treated in Germany, above all other countries, as matters of course), shrunk with disgust from that corruption in private life, which is only found to flourish where public virtue is unknown. He was aware that the Irish „high life" of the day was, in certain particulars, mounted upon springs similar to those which governed the aristocratic society of the Continent. But, however he might succumb under certain temptations, which the young and impassioned rarely resists, his principles would still have stood opposed to his conduct; and no cold-blooded sophistry in favour of what was wrong, would have advocated and excused his dereliction from what was right. O'Brien did not, for a moment, suppose himself in love with the wife of the Earl of Knocklofty, of whom he had seen and known so little. He had, indeed, thought not on the subject; but had suffered himself to be led on, flattered, seduced, and intoxicated by those

gracious and gratifying sensations peculiar to his time of life, and to the impression of which, that epoch alone is susceptible. For a moment, therefore, the pleasure he received from what he believed Lady Knocklofty's poetical challenge, wholly and deliciously pre-occupied him; and he resolved, come what might in the interim, that nothing short of physical inability should prevent his giving the rendez-vous to the mask, in rose, whose wreath, ring, and flower, he doubted not, would be exhibited as his signal and guide.

While he locked up the precious billet in the most secret drawer of his writing-box, the letter with the thimble impression again caught his eye. In a listless and almost unconscious curiosity, he opened it, and found a volume written in a long, narrow, old-fashioned, Italian hand, which was not quite unknown to him. He looked for the signature at the end of the fifth page, and saw, with something like pleasure, the name of Mable Mac Taaf, while, to a postscript scrawled on the envelope, appeared, „Your affectionate aunt, Monica." These names brought back to his heart a tide of kindly feelings, and gracious, though homely, recollections. The tenderest remembrance of his gentle and affectionate mother had rendered even the foibles and peculiarities of her elder sisters endurable, to one who was not himself of a very enduring temper; and

who, in boyhood, had sometimes ill-brooked the dictatorial manner of his aunts, and their vituperation of his father. Between Terence O'Brien and the Miss Mac Taafs, a temporary reconciliation had but laid the foundation for deeper animosities; and ten years' absence from St Grellan had cancelled all bonds of kindred and propinquity between Lord Arranmore and his sisters-in-law. Although he had not forbidden his son to write to his only surviving female relations, yet when he did so, and even proposed to visit them in the summer vacation, his father had, with his characteristic manner, observed, as he read the letter addressed to them in a style at once playful and tender — „You don't know them aunts of your's, or you forget them, Murrogh; which comes to the same thing. You might as well attempt to smooth down the back of a pet hedge-hog, as tame down the Miss Mac Taafs; who are for all the world like the cat *couchant* in the arms of the Blakes, always ready for a pounce; so take my advice, child, and lave the Miss Mac Taafs alone, and they'll lave you alone; and that's the best can happen to you."

*O'*Brien did not take his father's advice. The Miss Mac Taafs were his mother's sisters; they were women; and they were now old, perhaps helpless: and however dictatorial and despotic they might be to others, they had always been kind to him. He remembered the snipes he

had killed on their bogs with the brigadier's fowling-piece; he remembered, with something like pleasure, the cream and honey of Bog Moy, by the never spared abundance of which, his aunts had often sent him home sick and surfeited. He remembered the little Connemara pony, the first horse he had ever ridden, and which they had presented to him, on his first return from the Isles of Arran.

It was now five months since he had written to the ladies of Bog Moy, under the influence of these reminiscences; and the letter he now endeavoured to decipher, was their tardy and not very legible answer. The Miss Mac Taafs spelled as they spoke; and they spoke as the old Irish gentry spoke in the reign of Queen Anne. The Miss Mac Taafs wrote with all the dignified verbosity with which they conversed, in that little circle, to which they were both the law and the gospel, and their digressive style was both characteristic and national. Their letters ran as follows:

„DEAR NEPHEW,

„Your missive of the 30th of November came safely to hand; and no thanks to Paddy the post, but every blame in life — who let it drop upon the road near James Daly's dike, having got a sup in his eye, where it was found, by old Moll-of-the-rock, the *mona-shul** of St

---

* *Mona shul*, a wandering woman.

Grellan, or never should have set eyes on it. It has been in the contimplation of your aunt Monica and myself to acknowledge the receipt thereof, any day, for these last three months: and the marvel is that we get lave to sit down at all in pace and quiet, and reply to the contints therein contained; seeing that we are not lift time to bless ourselves, as the papists say (to whom no disparagement; laving that to the new comers and upstarts), what with one matter, and what with another, and the place never empty noon or night, but coming and going, and coshering and gostering, and the bog saison coming upon us all of a sudden, like an hail shower in June, in regard of the dry weather: and James Kelly (though surely a faithful servant and a trust-worthy, save in respect of the drop, poor cratur), not being as young, as he was when he mounted you on the little raghery; and them furreign undertakers at Moycullen, opening a new vein of red bog, and underselling the world; also green marble, of which more in due time. So that, what with one thing, and what with another, it is no aisy matter to get time to inform you, Murrogh O'Brien, of our good will to you, now and always: though, as your aunt Monica truly sayeth, it's little your father's son has a right to expect of us. For it's ourselves, Mable and Monica Mac Taaf, that never yet was the better of you, Terry O'Brien Lord Arranmore

to the value of a brass thimble; though when you was a poor garloch of a cratur, it's us, and ours, was at your wicked will, as the saying is, and the house never free from you, for like the crickets, oncet you got in, ould Nick would not get you out on't, till you falsely abducted that poor innocent, who, — but it is no matter now, nor shall you, Murrogh O'Brien, be a screed the worse for the great injury done us by your father; of which your mother's abduction (a child in the eye of the law, and our ward as well as sister and co-heiress), was not the first nor last. But of that hereafter; this being shortly and simply to tell you, that we shall be heartily glad to see you at Bog Moy, where board and bed is at your disposal; and would be plaising to know your *raal* intintions and views in life, which, by all accounts, are like the prospects of Mam Turk on a winter's day — high and cloudy. Hearing tell of all them that comes from Dublin, that your father's a ruined man, though now a great lord, in his mansion-house in the capital: but far less well to do now, than when he was Terry O'Brien, attorney at law, in his snug red brick house, in the High-street of St Grellan, and every thing dacent, and highly respectable about him. And hears from young counsellor Costello, nephew of the ould counsellor, and of the widow and Miss Costello (great cronies at Bog Moy, though

regular Ave Marias and great voteens, Father Festus Daly, P.P., director), that you carry your head above the world in Dublin college, and are the „*che shin*" * of the place; though nobody knows how your father keeps you there, nor for why, nor for what; since, being a lord's son, I don't see how you could, or ought to earn your own bread, either as a counsellor, or in any other way, except as chancellor of Ireland; which is a thing to be compared to Achille Head, high to look at, and far to get at; nor aisy either, to my mind. And the whole Ballyboe marvels much at your unexpected return to the country, at all, at all; the rumour going that you were hand and glove with the emperor, in respect of the honour done to the memory of your great great grand-uncle, the aulic counsellor Count Mac Taaf, also my cousin Rodolphus Mac Taaf, Chancellor of the Empire; and that you would be a gineral in no time; and many young chaps here was thinking of going over to you, thinking you would make their fortunes, and get them commissions in the imparial army, which, to be sure, you might.

„*But* we guess it was your father's doing, who has more tricks in him than a Leprachan, always devising, and colloguing, and policizing; and has his own raisons for getting you

---

* „Who is that?"

2), uterculiformi. terete, non annulato - reticulato, ubi-

back, I'll ingage. But Murrogh O'Brien, I would warn you well against such idle drames; and if you will be led by us, our intire and sincare advice to you is, that it is not on your father and his wild schemes, and ould Shanaos, you will depind. And as for your earning your crust and crum, by carrying a bag on your arm, and a lord's coronet on your head, I hope, for the honour of the family, it's what you won't attimpt; but be, in due course of time, a raal and undoubted estated nobleman. For though your aunt, Monica, and I, might make ducks and drakes of the lands of Bog Moy, if we plased, there being no male tail; and though by marrying to-morrow (and one is never too ould to do a foolish thing, hut the oulder the foolisher; not as you will see, that either myself or my sister, Monica, is a hair the worse since you left us, and will ride, walk, or dance an Irish jigg with the youngest she in the Ballyboe, be she who she may)! and, as I said before, by marrying to-morrow, we could bring the title of Ballyslattery, now in abeyance, into any family, and the green knighthood; yet having, at prisint, no such intintions, we are inclined to consider you as our natural heir, if not by law, always by affection (for favour goes by liking); and I need not mind you, Murrogh, that yourself was the pet of Bog Moy, when you was a donny cratur, though it's little signs on you, never

writing a line to say how it was with you— but pass for that. And would be plased that you would finish your college studies, in which I see neither rhyme nor right, seeing that when you left this ye were the greatest scholar of your age in the barony, in regard of the Latin which you spouted out like your mother's tongue, no thanks to the diocesan, but to poor Abbé O'Flaherty,— who, though a great papist, was a gentleman every bit of him, to the back bone; which is more than can be said of the Archdeacon Hunks, nor any of his breed, seed, or generation; and governs the town and Ballyboe under thim Proudforts (now Knockloftys), who seldom see the place but in election time, of which more when we meet, in which you are much concerned. And would wish you to lose no time, but come home, as I may say—for what other home have you but Bog Moy? and think you would find the same plasing to you in every way, and especially in making head against them mushrooms and Williamites, the Knockloftys, and the new comers and undertakers at Moycullen, and their hedging, and draining, and planting, and arogating,* as it is called, disputing the ould millstrame, that has been allowed to go over the country, without let or hindrance, with ould Mr Martin, of Dangan, and giving the

---

* Irrigating.

bog for nothing to them as wilt cut and dry it, and long leases, and building chimnies; and says it's a barbarous custom, ploughing, harrowing, and drawing horses, garans, and colts by the tail, after th' ould Connaught fashion 'whereby,' says their Scotch overseer to James Kelly, 'the breed of horses is impoverished in the country,' and such like talk; as if none ever ploughed, till the new undertakers of Moycullen came among us. And who are they at all? and what brings them here, building and bolstering up th' ould Abbey, and the ould dwelling-house of the O'Fflaherties? But all doing from the Galway side, and Lough Corrib; and th' ould pass to the mountains, Glen Murrogh (so called after your ancestors), not opened. But of this more when we meet, only wishing you were here on the spot. Remain,

„Truely your affectionate Aunt,

„Mable Mac taaf.

„P. S. Plase to mintion when you mane to come — say this day fortnight; having it in contemplation to give a Jug-day to the country round, in regard of the pipe of claret from cousin Hyacinth French and Co., Bordeaux; also six beds in the barrack-room, and shakes down in plinty; also wishes you would borrow your father's coroneted coach for the journey, and not come in like a boccah! * on a market day,

* A lame beggar.

sly ond shabby; and if means were, would send you the Brigadier's Kevenhuller hat; but supposes you have a military three-cocked of your own—for once a colonel. And would heartily desire you should drive through the town in your full shute of furreign regimentals; and I'll ingage it's widow and Miss Costello will be on the *shoughraun* looking out for you at the bay window. And mind, when you come, that you don't tread on Paddy Whack's tail, for he's the darling now with your aunt Monica; and a dirty darling he is, neither wormed nor clipped, and the most troublesome cur in the barony this day — but every one to their taste. And am your affectionate,

„M. Mac T."

„Dear Nephew Murrogh,

„I slip in a line in the cover of the inclosed, just to say I join my sister, Mable, in all good wishes, and hopes to see you; 'and the sight will be good for sore eyes,' says Father Festus, who takes an hand at 'five-and-forty' with us by times, and was coadjutor when you were in it. Plase to say, is grogram worn now? also colberteen? Would deem it a favour to inquire if a Kerry stone solitaire, of *great* value (once Lady Betty Mac Taaf's), would be trucked with advantage against a pair of silver shoe buckles and salt-cellars. — N. B. Try Skinner's Row, No. 6. Peter Blake, silversmith, of

Galway, undervalues the same, though twice brought to him. Also, would like to have, if not too troublesome, a double-quilted camlet petticoat, like Miss Costello's, eked out with grey serge behind. To be had No. 77, Corn Market, opposite the sign of the Golden Flace. — N. B. Make use of Miss Prudence Costello's name (got her by the young counsellor, a great *buckeen*). Will be surprised to hear that the ladies of Mary, John, and Joseph, much respected, are dissolved by order of the Provincial, and are transported to a new order or confraternity in Moycullen, as yet nobody knows where. Some say th' ould Abbey of Moycullen, some say Cong; having never thriven, as Father Festus says, P. P. of St Grellan, since your great grand-aunt's time of Ballyslattery, Supariour thereoff, long after the Bogmoys came over to the protestant church; and will be happy on your arrival to pay for same.

„Your loving Aunt,

„Monica Mac Taaf.

„P. S. Wish just to mention, in a *sly way*' that if you don't mane to strew green rushes under James Kelly's feet, you may as well quit at once — governs the place intirely, and is the sense-keeper of the family. As to his not being wormed, it is not true; but, give a dog an ill-name, and hang him, which is the case with Paddy Whack. See, and judge for yourself! —

so called after Paddy Whack, ould Mr Robin Martin, of Dangan's Dog, young Dick's father, of whose breed he is, dam, Miss Joyce, of Joyce's county,* her dog Stella, first cousin once removed. So self and sister expects to see all the family on the Jug-day, long in contimplation, and hope to see you of the party. Till then, and ever, yours, etc. again with raal regard. Your affectionate aunt,

„MONICA."

The perusal of this strange, but characteristic farago, which, under other circumstances, might have amused him to whom it was addressed, served only, in his present tone of depression, to sink his spirits still lower. His „making head against the Knockloftys," broadened his smile to a laugh; and the chances of going „into the neighbourhood of Lady Knocklofty's summer residence," increased the palpitation which even her name upon paper had excited. On the subject of titles and inheritances, however, he was completely disabused; and if his romantic imagination still gave him an interest in the historical names of his country, if a feeling of family pride still lay lingering in his mind, the mortifying position between rank and indigence, in which his father's recovered honours had placed him, combining with opinions formed under

* A large tract of land, so called in Connaught.

the social philosophy of the day, left his aunt's views and promises of hereditary honours without a single attraction. „The Green Knight of the Fassagh! the Baron of Ballyslattery!! How ridiculous!" he said; „who would go labelled into the world with such absurd titles?"

The estate of Bog Moy, indeed, might, he thought, be a substantial benefit. Although he had no great confidence in Connemara estates, he remembered the great importance he had attached to Bog Moy, and to the ladies of Bog Moy, in his childhood. They were to him like the queens or ogresses of a fairy tale —tall, gaunt, majestic, and awful. Here, then, was a hope against abject poverty, and a home against utter destitution: but on what terms! — dependence, evidently — absolute, subservient, and humiliating dependence upon two dictatorial, ignorant, old-fashioned, and eccentric women; with all the idle gossipping of a remote country neighbourhood, such as might he expected from the widow Costello, and the parish priest, James Kelly, Miss Costello, and Paddy Whack. „No," he said, as he sat clasping his hands despondingly, „not for all the green knighthoods, the honours of Ballyslattery, and the wealth of the turf mines of Bog Moy! With robust health, the consciousness of some talent, and exhaustless energy, with Ireland in my heart, and a spirit to

meet the worst and dare the worst in her cause, what have I to fear?"

There was, however, a tone of good will, of family feeling, quaintly expressed, indeed, in this letter, that was not ungracious to O' Brien's feelings. There was a home to give him temporary shelter; and in the Brigadier's tower-chamber, he might, by hard study and application, make up for the time he should lose, by a rigorous but, he frankly owned, not altogether an unmerited sentence, such as he anticipated. And now, with the hope that Shane had escaped, and was on the way back to his native mountains; and in the confidence that his father, if in town, would not fail to give him some sign of life in the course of the day, and that Lady Knocklofty would receive the homage of a visit he was about to offer her, — a visit of thanks, *pour le moins* for the protection and influence she had exerted in his favour—he arose to dress: but he found that his whole wardrobe, with Lord Walter's great-coat, had been taken away.

He threw up the window, and called to „the boy" who attended at his chambers. But the queer old cripple, who answered to that juvenile appellation, and who in a scratch wig and ragged surtout, usually occupied the stone bench in front of the building, inhabited by such of the students as had appointed him their valet, was not, as usual, at his post. While

still waiting for him, and looking listlessly out of the window, O'Brien saw the same porter, as had lighted him to his room, the night before, cross the court, followed by „the boy," who was carrying the clothes, cap and gown, which were missing. The porter was an old familiar of the institution, jealous of its dignity, and a stern and rigorous upholder of the points of discipline which concerned his high and important calling, as the provost himself.

O'Brien perceived that his page had only taken away his clothes to brush them; and that the gruff old porter accompanied him for the purpose of delivering a college mandate. On opening, he found it to contain a summons to attend a board on the following day. While reading it, he felt the pressure of the cripple's foot upon his own, who took the opportunity of passing with the clothes into the inner room, thus to arrest his attention. He looked round abruptly, and perceived that the porter lingered at the outward door, as if to watch the underling out; who on again passing Murrogh, muttered, „mind, Domine, you know nothing of the papers in the great-coat." The two servants then departed together. O'Brien's first impulse was to call after the porter, and order a messenger to take home Lord Walter's coat to F. House, But instantly taking the hint that its pockets might have contained something that affected, or could injure its

owner, he checked the impulse, and resolved to write to him; and to leave the note himself, in case he should not find him at home.

He had already began his letter, when the same gruff Cerberus, who seemed to have him in especial *surveillance*, brought him the following note.

„My Dear O'Brien,

„For you must allow me to use a form of familiar intimacy, where I am desirous to become both intimate and familiar, — I write to say that I am obliged to leave town with my brother, the duke, and cannot possibly return till to-morrow afternoon, when I will call upon you in college about four o'clock. I regret that I cannot meet you at the mess of the Prince's Own — will you try, if there are any papers in my great-coat pocket, and burn them; keep the coat till my servant calls for it.

„Your's faithfully, and in haste,

„Walter F."

The coincidence between the warning of „the boy," and the direction of Lord Walter, struck O'Brien with some surprise. What papers could the brother of the Duke of F. have about his person, which it was important should be destroyed? and what, if they were not unknown to the underlings of the university, and had been examined? Without indulg-

ing further in surmise, he proceeded to fulfil his friend's injunction; but on examination, found the pockets of the great-coat empty. Either Lord Walter had been mistaken, or the papers had been removed. In so doubtful a case, he deemed it most prudent to make no inquiry, and to show no solicitude; and to this he was the more induced, because, the secret of the owner of the coat was in his keeping, and whatever might be the nature of the papers, Lord Walter's name would remain unconnected with them.

O'Brien, therefore, finished his toilette; and, though pale and haggard, from fatigue, anxiety, and emotion, there was a reflexion in his glass which might have soothed his vanity, and have told him that a cheek so pale, and a look so pensive, did not assort ill with eyes so dark, and features formed in the very mould of sentiment. Thus armed, though unconsciously, for conquest, and ignorant that ladies who profess platonism, and *poussent les grands sentimens,"* prefer pale young men with dark eyes, to ruddy young men with light ones, he was issuing forth from the stone porch of the building, when he was met by an orderly, who inquired for the rooms of the Hon. Murrogh O'Brien. O'Brien acknowledged himself, and received the following note from the orderly, who immediately rode off:—

„Lord Charles Fitzcharles regrets, that circumstances of a particular nature will prevent him from having the pleasure of receiving Mr O'Brien at the mess dinner of the Prince's Own, on this day."

„*Barracks, Wednesday Morning.*"

This note struck O'Brien with deep mortification, he scarcely knew why. He felt its contents almost as an insult; and had he obeyed the very Irish, and very petulant feelings of the moment, he would have answered it by a challenge to the Fifteen Acres. But to fight a man for not being able, or even willing to receive him at dinner, was rather a desperate and Bobadil measure; so tearing the paper into a thousand pieces, he hummed away his irritable and nervous feelings; and again walked forth, directing his steps to Knocklofty House, with spirits depressed, even beyond the power of the delightful visit he anticipated to raise them.

He soon reached the gates of that noble mansion, and was passed on from the porter's lodge to the vestibule, where a crowd of liveried footmen received his card, and forwarded it to a groom of the chambers, who leaned in gossipping idleness with one of his fraternity, over the balustrade of the first corridor. After an interval of a few minutes the card was returned, to be entered into the porter's book,

and an answer given that her ladyship was not at home: this was possible,—was probable,—was perhaps, the fact; and yet it confounded O'Brien, and amazed him. As he took back his card, at the porter's request, to write his address on it, that it might be entered in the great record of ceremony, over which that functionary presided, Lord Kilcolman came down the great stair-case, looked at O'Brien, without recognizing him, mounted his horse, which a groom was leading about the court, and rode off.

O'Brien went forth. The summons to the board, the sudden departure of Lord Walter, the mysterious papers, the excuse of Lord Fitzcharles, the denial of Lady Knocklofty, and the insolent cut conclusive of Lord Kilcolman, combined to work powerfully upon a proud, touchy, and susceptible imagination; and before he had got a hundred yards from Knocklofty House, he not only considered himself as a very ill-used gentleman, but gradually worked up his morbid fancy to see in himself one who had lost caste, and who was cut and branded as the very pariah of society.

In this cup of mingled bitternesses, the sole palateable infusion was derived from the confiding and friendly tone of Lord Walter's letter; and the consciousness of maintaining and deserving the friendship of such a person, enabled him to treat with comparative indifference

the slights of the Kilcolmans and Fitzcharles's, and assisted in restoring his spirits to something like equanimity.

His next visit was to his father's attorney in Yorkstreet: but Mr Fitton, a noted limb of the law, and conductor of the litigations of half the gentry of Connemara, whose bills of costs were the only bills they permitted themselves to pay, was on circuit; and the young men in the office had not seen Lord Arranmore for more than three weeks. All the information O'Brien could obtain, was from the head clerk, who whispered him that the execution had been for the non-payment of a bill; and that till some settlement was effected with his very refractory creditors, his lordship found it prudent to keep out of the way.

„And what settlemeut — what compromise can be made," asked O'Brien, „when no assets," he was about to say, but he paused, and the clerk added.

„Oh, I believe matters will be settled in a day or two, a friend has come forward, and money has been advanced."

„A friend! what friend?"

„Of that we know nothing," said the clerk: „he acts by a agent, with whom Mr Fitton has kad several interviews; but I believe he is some foreign relation."

O'Brien started; he knew but of one foreign relation, but of one living, who could have

the means, if indeed he still had them; and this person was the secretary of the Propaganda at Rome, the Ex-superior of the Jesuit's college in the eternal city; but he was in Rome, and advanced in life beyond the given years of man. Neither had Lord Arranmore mentioned his uncle since O'Brien's return, except once or twice in a cursory way.

„Have you any idea," he asked, „that this kind relation is an ecclesiastic?"

„I suspect he is," said the clerk, „and that there is a lady in the case, at least Counsellor Blosset, the agent of the party, seemed to say as much; and a note sent us yesterday by the counsellor is in a female hand."

„Can I see it?" asked O'Brien; and the clerk seeking among some papers, presented a note, and observed,

„You may be sure it is from a lady by the fine scent."

The note breathed of the perfume of the *mil-lefiori*; and he thought was in the same handwriting as that which he had received in the morning—a new light broke upon him. Was there — could there be some secret tye between his family and Lady Knocklofty? The interest she took in him might thus be accounted for: and if his vanity suffered some abatement by this suspicion, his feelings were not the less gratified, nor his prepossession for the fair

Urganda (who thus waved her magic wand over the fortunes of his family) diminished.

Still all was mere surmise; but O'Brien without spirits or opportunity for proceeding further with his inquiries, returned to college, ordered his commons to his own room, and in the evening determined to go, perhaps for the last time, to the Historical Society.

The rumour of his inevitable expulsion had been widely spread, and was known to all but himself. Strange reports had gone abroad, which his friends, in disbelief of their veracity, and in delicacy to his feelings, had concealed from him. The accusation that would chiefly affect him, was the supposition that he belonged to some secret society of which government had intimation; but his liberal principles, some theological opinions, on points purely speculative, and a open, frank and manly advocacy of catholic emancipation, were also items in his accusation, which covered him with glory in the eyes of his young co-partners in the Historical Society. On his appearance in the society, he was received with loud cheering. Many of its ardent members, and some who have since worn the ermine, took his martyrdom as the theme of their impassioned eloquence on that night; and a declaratory resolution was proposed, that under all circumstances, Murrogh O'Brien would ever be considered as a most distinguished

ornament of that society, as he had uniformly been amongst its most energetic and useful members.

This ardent rally round the victim of impending persecution, was balm to the wounded spirit of O'Brien. Among the bitterest sensations to which humanity is exposed, is the consciousness of having made great personal efforts for a ungrateful or an unworthy public. The discovery that we have over estimated the public spirit of our age,—that we have acted from a confidence in high aspirations and intense feelings, which had no existence; the sudden conviction of a wide-spreading and grovelling selfishness among the lofty pretenders to patriotism and zeal, convey not only disappointment and disgust to the mind on which they burst, but also a sense of dupery, the most irritating and intolerable. The melancholy doubt of Brutus, that the virtue to which his life had been one long sacrifice, was but a name, is the most desolating shipwreck of human hopes, which history has recorded; the tortures of Regulus, the fanaticism of Scaevola, make no such call upon our sympathy.

From this pang, O'Brien was spared; the sordid calculations of egotism had not yet infected the youth of the country; nor were prudent considerations of remote and contingent dangers, ranged among the first elements of

collegiate morality. Those, even, who had been but slightly acquainted with the object of the meditated attack, now officiously crowded around him, to mark their participation in his sentiments, and their contempt for his persecutors. It is melancholy to reflect that among this youthful and ardent band, were some who, incapable of that passive resistance which is so essential to a public cause, yielded in after life to the temptations of avarice and of ambition; men who sat in judgment on their former companions, and passed the sentence of an ignominious death, upon heads unstained by any crime, save that in which they had themselves so largely participated—a love, an unregulated, but an ardent love for Ireland.

CHAPTER II.

THE EXPULSION.

Rien n'est impossible; il y a des voies qui conduisent à toutes choses, et, si nous avions assez de volonté, nous aurions toujours assez de moyens.

De la Rochefoucault.

It is an awful thing to hear some great public bell at an unwonted hour solemnly toll the tocsin of alarm, the announce of some public calamity or private misfortune, of death, of fire, of insurrection. In the gloom of a chill and truly Irish spring evening, the bell of the university, thus unseasonably clamorous, aroused the curiosity and alarm of the neighbouring citizens, as it tolled for the purpose of collecting the members of the university in procession, to accompany the provost and fellows to the great hall, for the purpose of pronouncing sentence of expulsion, and of erasing from the university books the name of him who had encountered its ban.

From the star-chamber of the learned and secret tribunal (where the delinquent is tried, heard, but not confronted with his accusers), to the examination hall, where sentence is pronounced, the distance is but short. Yet the

bell had rung for some time, and the chiefs of the college had waited for some minutes in their robes for their usual attendants on public ceremonies: none swelled their train, save a few sizers, a still fewer number of the scholars of the house, and the domestic officials. At the head of these followers, the authorities proceeded to the hall; and in their presence only the name of the distinguished fellow-commoner, the Hon. Murrogh O'Brien, was erased from the books, and the fiat of his expulsion solemnly made known. At the instant of denunciation, a groan was heard from the remoter part of the hall under the gallery; a sound that seemed to burst from the oppression of a broken heart. But it passed away. None perceived who had uttered it; and the procession returned to the provost's house, with the same ceremonial with which it had set out.

Upon all such awful occasions, delicacy prevents the greater number of the students from being present at the last ceremony. The previous investigations being conducted with great privacy, and in secret committee, the students, with the usual generosity of youth, refrain from sanctioning by their presence a sentence, of whose merits they are not permitted to judge. But never had the college courts exhibited such a scene of gloomy desolation and utter desertion, as on that evening, when, after an examination of several hours before

the visitors of the university, Murrogh O'Brien was found guilty of those high crimes and misdemeanors, which were, in the apprehension of the autocrats of the moment, beyond the pale of all mercy. It is melancholy to reflect that collegiate expulsion, a censure inflicted in the very outset of life, and influencing all its ulterior prospects, is necessarily not governed by any fixed and written law, but by the will of the supreme authorities. Though in all the universities of the sister kingdoms a great practical forbearance usually accompanies the exercise of this discretion, yet, in all, a capricious or vindictive sentence is possible. Nor is it to be wondered if; in the bad times of Ireland, political consideration powerfully influenced the decisions of the visitors of Trinity College, on the fate of its suspected, and perhaps calumniated students.

Even the college park, then the evening resort of the younger members of the university, was on this evening completely deserted; or if some few wandered in its deep shaded and gloomy avenues of trees, almost coeval with the foundation of the institution, they were confounded with the shadows of its old elms and oaks, and were as invisible as if they were not.

It was while the sentence of expulsion was yet pronouncing, that he on whose devoted head it was launched, rushed from the dark stone passage which leads to the Provost's

house, and passed into the park. Heated, flushed, fevered, exhausted, after having been baited, worried, and cross-examined, worked into vehement and unguarded petulance, and tortured into self-crimination, or to what was deemed such, by the cold-blooded scrutiny and provoking insolence of forensic ability (for the most formidable of his judges was the most active of his examiners), O'Brien sought the refreshment of shade, silence, and solitude, with the same eagerness with which the wounded hart „panteth after the waters."

He felt the delicacy of his fellow-students, in the desertion with left him thus unobtruded upon; and he availed himself of it to conceal the immediate sting of mortification, and to recover from the first shock of a sentence, severe beyond his worst anticipations, and preceded by an examination of the most unexpected and embarrassing nature.

It was evident that, not his conduct, but his opinions had been the chief mark of inquiry. He had been accused of popery, and at the same time infidelity; and the whole drift of his scrutineers was less to bring home to him the riot at the Strugglers, than to involve him in the great Socratic accusation which has served in turn for striking at all opinions, and putting down the victims of every sect, — the accusation of „believing in the other gods than those by law established, and corrupting the youth of the country."

Besides this sweeping and general charge, he was arraigned as the open leader of political faction in the college; of acting as the secret agent for the French jacobins, and of being a member of a new seditious society, which the government was then watching with such suspicion and alarm, but which was, as yet, too constitutional to give a handle for legal prosecution.

Of this charge he stood accused on the evidence of some papers which had dropped from the pocket of his great coat, while under the process of brushing, in the porter's lodge. The contents of these papers amazed him; he might have cleared himself of the imputation by revealing to whom the coat belonged. But, in denying all knowledge of the papers, he truly and rigorously kept the secret of Lord Walter; and though he left, with bitterness and indignation, that his word, under these circumstances of partial concealment, was not believed, he had persisted in withholding the only exculpation which could vindicate his veracity.

In a temper of mind, such as these events might naturally be supposed to produce in such a character, O'Brien sought the deepest shades of the umbrageous and straight-lined avenues of trees, which then overhung the Anatomy-house, the nocturnal resort of resurrection-men, and the site of many a superstitious tale.

He was pacing with steps rapid and hurrried as his thoughts, when he suddenly came against some person, whose march was as precipitate as his own. It was Lord Walter Fitzwalter; their recognition was instantaneous. Lord Walter passed his arm through O'Brien's, and turning up the avenue, said, abruptly, „You are expelled, I hear."

„The news has had a quick circulation," said O'Brien, with a forced laugh; „the bell has scarcely yet done tolling out my knell."

„On what charges have you been expelled?" said Lord Walter, eagerly.

„Charges the most frivolous; but quite enough to establish my delinquency, under statutes which have long rested in abeyance, and have only been revived in my especial case. The true cause of my expulsion is, however, not my being '*membrum pestilens, et cæteris valde perniciosum*,' but my opinions."

„Your opinions! — But who has denounced them?"

„Our board, like the tribunal of the Inquisition, does not permit the accused to be confronted with his accusers; but the principal evidence against me was — myself. Attacked on the score of my principles, I scorned subterfuge, and rebutted the charge by a defence still more obnoxious than the particulars of my accusation. I confessed myself the author of a pamphlet on the necessity of a reform in par-

liament, and catholic emancipation, for the 'better quieting the country' (to use a phrase of Elizabeth's times). This was '*the very head and front of my offending — no more.*'"

Lord Walter paused for a moment, and then abruptly asked, „What did you do with the papers you found in my great-coat pocket?"

O'Brien, after an instant's hesitation, replied, „I found none."

„Did you look in the breast-pocket, as I requested of you?"

„In every part of the coat. There were no papers — "

„My dear O'Brien," said Lord Walter, pressing his hand, „you have relieved my mind from a terrible load of anxiety. The other night, coming out of a particular society, a person, one known to me, thrust a paper into my hand, and desired me to read it attentively. I put it into the breast-pocket of my great-coat, forgot it, and was reminded of it at an early hour yesterday, when I wrote instantly to you to burn it. Being obliged to hasten without delay to my brother the Duke, who had been seized with an eminently dangerous attack of gout, I have been haunted ever since with the idea of the danger which might accrue to you, should the paper be found in your possession. I have, therefore, taken the first possible moment of return to see you, and on my arrival in town, an hour ago, hastened to

your rooms. At the gates of the college I learned the event which has occurred."

„Are you aware of what this paper contained?" demanded O'Brien, carelessly.

„Nothing less than a plan for the separation of Ireland from England."

„A plan," said O'Brien, „as physically impracticable, at the present moment, as it would always be politically unwise."

„Exactly," said Lord Walter; „but all great causes have two enemies to guard against amongst their advocates, — those who, by hurrying on events before they are ripe for development, insure defeat; — and those who, by a bigoted attachment to inapplicable abstractions, and by bringing the principles of past combinations to bear upon present occurrences, miss the occasion for effecting that practical good, which can never be obtained but by consulting the genius of the times, and acting under its influence."

„And who was the author of this notable proposition?"

„His name is — but no, hang it, he has, though perhaps unwittingly, trusted me with his secret (for I am not quite sure the paper he gave me was the one he intended), and I will not risk his name, even to you."

„You are quite right," said O'Brien warmly; „it would be a breach of trust, of — "

„Oh!" interrupted Lord Walter, smiling,

'the danger would not, I believe, be great; for I have a strange suspicion that he is an emissary of government; one of the paid fomenters of sedition, who first lay the train, and afterwards apply the spark, which makes the explosion. But a truce with the subject; and let us speak of what, just now, interests me infinitely more, your expulsion."

„Expulsion, I believe, is not disgrace?" said O'Brien, in an anxious and inquiring tone. „It does not necessarily lower its victim in public opinion? If it blast his prospects, it may still leave honour untainted, and character undefiled."

„Expulsion," said Lord Walter, „is undoubtedly intended to be taken as a mark of disgrace; but the moral value of such authoritative decrees is not at the disposal of the tribunal which launches them. Honest and honourable men, in all times, have been expelled, excommunicated, banished, inflicted with infamous corporeal punishments, and some have died the death of the felon; yet their fair fame has come out the brighter from the fiery persecution through which it passed. The banishment of Aristides was the immortal infamy of his enemies; and the glorious patriotism of Sydney and of Russel, was not to be sullied by the tyrants who maligned and — murdered them."

„But *I* am not Aristides!" said O'Brien,

with a pettish laugh, „nor Sydney, nor Russel. Humanity has no interests to defend in my person; and the instincts of mankind will not force opinion to do me justice."

„True," said Lord Walter. „But neither is the board of pedantic muftis, headed by their superior the vice-chancellor (though one of Ireland's most implacable enemies), among those great tribunals, which impose upon mankind. The sphere of their influence extends not beyond that of their activity."

„Such a consideration," said O'Brien, „is the only escape the wounded spirit finds from local littlenesses, and temporary oppressions. It is a relief to send forth one's thoughts, and to lose in the contemplation of great and general causes, the bitter sense of petty and personal inflictions. The world is indeed still before me, where to chuse; but, Lord Walter, Ireland is my vocation! If foreign rank had been my calling, I might have fought my way to ambitious distinctions, like others of my countrymen, like all men of strong volitions, who, worried and oppressed at home, find the intentions of nature in their favour justified, by the acknowledgement of their merit abroad, where no local disqualifications impede their progress. But here, in this unhappy land, stands the altar of my first and warmest vows: and in returning home, and breaking the brilliant thraldom of my past profession, I had

hoped, by honest exertion, by devoted patriotism, and by some success in that liberal profession, which gives to the bar the dignity of the forum, — I had hoped, as the defender of persecuted individuals, as a champion of the great cause of political and religious freedom, to have served Ireland, and to have arrived at an honourable independence; without which man can never act as his conscience dictates, nor place himself beyond the influence of grovelling and debasing necessity. Andrew Marvel, my dear Lord Walter, did much upon his cold shoulder of mutton; but still he possessed the means of its purchase: for after all, man is not like the lily of the valley; and where the rewards of profitable labour are denied, he is shorn alike of his political and of personal morality.

„On arriving in this country, that I might give to my new profession all the *éclat* of which it is susceptible, and that I might wholly efface the mark of my foreign education, I entered at rather a late period of life, the national university. A classical scholar, almost from my cradle (like those Irish urchins who, as Stanihurst says, in his days spouted Latin more fluently than their mother tongue), I came not unprepared for collegiate success; and I should have obtained it: but vaulting ambition hath o'erleaped itself; and the step taken in the highest consideration for the hon-

ourable profession I was about to enter, has become the stumbling-block of my destiny. Marked and branded, I go forth labelled with the disgrace of expulsion. Can such a person bring credit to any — "

„My dear O'Brien," interrupted Lord Walter, „you are viewing your present position under the depressing influence of a very diseased state of mind. You have but anticipated events. Expulsion from college has merely saved you from the mortification of a more mature defeat. With your feelings and your opinions, with your frank and impetuous temperament, all hope of success in any of the professions was, in this country, mere delirium. Look at Curran, Grattan, Ponsonby; under the present system, the dignities of the law are not for them. In the law, one merit alone is acknowledged, alone rewarded; and that is political subserviency. Are you for the scarlet robe of physic? 'throw physic to the dogs!' A patriot physician, a physician who thinks, or feels, or reasons beyond the limits of the pharmacopœia, is no physician for the public. He may dissipate his time and his faculties in idle gossip, in intrigue, in dependance, and if he do but wear black stockings and a grave countenance, if he only attends the church or the meeting, he will undoubtedly succeed; but if he raise his regard to the greater interests of humanity, nay, if he diverges into the philos-

ophy even of his own craft, and sees more in his profession than the phials he fills, he is an unprofitable branch, fit only to be lopped off and cast into the fire. Then as for the church — "

„*Halte-là*," said O'Brien, smiling, „there is no danger of my taking that broad road to intellectual and moral nothingness."

„Well then, on summing up the evidence, it seems to me the verdict is in your favour. You are free, free to make the honest application of your talents, in the way most congenial to your own nature."

„*De l'esprit pour s'avancer! Monseigneur se moque de moi.* No, no, my Lord, in professions or out of them, here I fear the case is still the same, '*médiocre et rampant, et l'on arrive à tout*,' and so much for my expectations on *this* side the Irish channel."

„Your entering at the present epoch," said Lord Walter, „into the Irish University, was certainly a false calculation; and all things considered, I do not see that the board could have acted otherwise than as they have done. For until premiums are given for patriotism, and church preferment waits upon public spirit, it is to little purpose that the language of liberty is taught in our classes, and that Demosthenes and Æschylus are illustrated from our professors' chairs."

„Yes," said O'Brien, kindled at the fire of Lord Walter's manner, „we are taught the

Greek, to become acquainted with its metres, not to catch the glorious spirit which breathes in the pages of its poets and its orators. We may scan lines, and string centos of poetical fragments, but woe to those students who presume to scan men or combine realities. The only classic maxim popular in college is the *populus me sibilat, at mihi plaudo*; all, however, will, not do: while such studies are taught, while such authors are perused, even the Irish youth will not be slow to interpret them in their proper way."

„Yes," said Lord Walter; „and eventually imitating what they must admire, they will one day unite to redress wrongs, such as Greece or Rome never suffered under. For which of the varied oppressors of those countries have rivalled the despotism of the Stones and the Boulters, the Kings and the Knockloftys!"

O'Brien's arm, as it leaned on Lord Walter's, seemed to vibrate with an electric shock, at the mention of the last name. He hemm'd away a sigh, and Lord Walter continued, „Our youths, so deeply versed in ancient patriotism, so called upon by modern example (all Irish and humbled as they are), will one day associate for the purposes of national redemption, by its sole means, — *a national union!* — that brotherhood of affection, that community of interest, which operating from its centre, to the remotest verge of society, will effect a

regeneration by means as constitutional as they are effectual."

„And those means?" demanded O'Brien, breathlessly and impatient.

„Are reform in the representation, and the abolition of the penal code."

„And with such means," exclaimed O'Brien, „and with the greatest happiness of the greatest number for its dogma, what ages of suffering might not be spared to this long-suffering land? How long have men congregated, combined, conspired for the purposes of oppression and injustice? What has not been effected by the unholy alliance of despots, by kings, by Popes, by the Jesuits of all ages, catholic and protestant, christian and unfidel (for the sins of churchmen belong to their craft, and not to the religion they accidentally profess). What has not in all climes been done against the liberties of mankind by the co-operation of knaves! What might not be effected for their service by the union of the virtuous?"

„Suppose," said Lord Walter, lowering his voice, „such an association *did* exist, with your own maxim for its object, *the greatest happiness of the greatest number*, and with the appropriate motto of „*idem sentire, dicere, et agere*," if such an union of strong minds and true hearts did exist, would you make the voluntary offering of your time, your talents, and your energies, of your — "

„Of my life," interrupted O'Brien, enthusiastically; „alas! 'tis all I have to offer."

„Say you so," continued Lord Walter, in a still more subdued tone; „but suppose such a society *did* exist in embryo; as yet but feeling its way to the talent and liberality of the Irish heart; and therefore assuming for the present the secrecy and caution which is unhappily sometimes more necessary for the promotion of good, than of evil. Suppose such a society found it necessary to observe a discretion bordering on mystery, a secrecy which renders the bond of union more cohesive, its spirit more ardent; for in all human associations, the weakness of humanity must be taken into account, and the imagination enlisted on the side of reason."

„It was in no secret association," said O'Brien, thoughtfully, „that the great principle of American Independence originated. It was the free and bold explosion of public opinion, which, in giving birth to the French revolution, worked openly, and in the face of day. I distrust, I dislike secrecy."

„But Ireland, wretched Ireland has no public opinion, no public to express an opinion," replied Lord Walter, eagerly. „Ireland is not America, still less is it France. The knowledge, the phylosophy of the one, the energy, the freshness of the other, are wanting to this land of helots. The lever, by which this inert mass is to be moved, is one of infinite delicacy.

Its springs must be secret, for they are of no vulgar mechanism. Besides, had you not in France your clubs, your affiliations, and something of the mystery as well as the ceremony of freemasonry?"

„Yes," said O'Brien, „but that is not the best aspect of the French revolution. It was the personal ambition, and pretty reckless intrigues of these clubs, that palsied the national impulse; and will, eventually, I fear, check its progress, and turn aside its course. The revolution which is not based on public opinion, is at best but insurrection. Still, I will concede something to human weakness, and to the peculiar phasis of Irish society, I will allow as much mystery as will excite, with as much ceremonial as may strike on the senses without impeding real business, — and will animate philosophy without awakening the passions."

„Exactly, exactly," interrupted Lord Walter, eagerly. „You have described the utmost verge of mystery intended in the present association of devoted patriots; who, to the total immolation of all personal interests and private views, have constituted themselves a body by the name of the 'Society of United Irishmen of Dublin.' It is to this society I would direct your views, your thoughts, your genius, and your actions."

O'Brien replied with some astonishments: „It is as an imputed member of this society that I have already been accused of sedition,

and incipient rebellion; though I heard its name pronounced this day for the first time. This is the society which I have just heard accused of exciting the people to rebellion, of overturning the king's government, and separating Ireland from England, and of employing the sacred name of the Irish Volunteers, to cover the formation of an armed banditti, who, in due time, were, with the appellation of national guard, to overthrow the constitution, and to govern Ireland in its stead."

„In the present state of things," said Lord Walter, „this is the basest of calumnies. So constitutional, indeed, has been the conduct of the society, that though some of the paid spies of government have, it is suspected, enrolled themselves among our members to betray us, they have been unable to afford even the slightest pretext for interference or prosecution. To what we may yet be driven, by the machinations of the faction who govern the country, 'twere vain to anticipate: but that men, some of them of the most illustrious families, the most independent fortunes, of the highest character, of the most brilliant talents, members of the bar, and of the church — that such men have been the founders of the society, and are among its members, is some warrant for the purity of its motives, and even for the wisdom of its object."

„The man who addresses me," said O'Brien,

„is, in my mind, sufficient security for its honour, its propriety, and its purity. The descendant of the princely Geraldines, the brother of a peer of the realm, one who has every thing to lose, and so little to gain, by a change — I want no other surety."

Then suddenly stopping short in his rapid pace, and taking both the hands of the young nobleman in his with the strong compression of vehement feeling, he added, „Lord Walter, I also am a united Irishman, united with the advocates of the cause of Ireland by all the ties of sympathy and conviction; and in all sincerity, I am ready at this moment to become a member of your society by any outward form its discretion may dictate. But I must not — I will not intrude upon your confidence, or upon that of your associates, without the fullest, the frankest exposition of who and what I am.

„You and the world, the little world which takes any note of *my* existence, know but this, that I am a member of the illustrious family of O'Brien; which founded its glory, not in the royal dignity of its sons, but in the devotion of that illustrious chieftain who defended his native land against foreign invasion, and died in the cause of national independence. They know me as the son of an eccentric nobleman, as a fellow commoner of the Irish university, and as one to whom the narrow circle of his acquaintance has given the full

meed for those trifling abilities, which a vehement temperament has perhaps pushed too obviously upon public notice. But you have yet to know that the Hon. Murrogh O'Brien is the son of an ex-attorney, a pauper, bankrupt peer; that, ever at odds between his poverty and his gentility, he has for the last few months earned a penurious support by the exertion of mental labour, borrowed from the hours of his natural repose and his daily studies. You see, then, Lord Walter, before you one, who, to live, must have recourse to his head or his arm, to his pen or his musket. The story of my short life may be briefly summed up. It forms a page in the history of a country, to which it is an infliction to belong. From my birth, the victim of false impressions, — reared as the wildest of my sept, and in the wildest regions of the land, — born and educated in the Isles of Arran, amidst the temples of traditional superstition, and the ruins of barbarous grandeur, — fed upon the dream of ancient Irish glory, and in the faith of early Irish sanctity, — my first preceptor was the poor, half-civilized creature, with whom you last night found me associated; — my next instructor, the most learned, the most elegant minded of men, an Irish foreign ecclesiastic, one who, like the Culdees of old, lived an example of the pure morality he taught. Again dragged by intolerance from my seagirt isles,

and forced by that protestant Jesuitism, so similar in its means and ends to the system of Loyola, into a seminary of the established church, — kidnapped into protestantism, as my father had been before me, — witnessing the persecution of my excellent and learned friend, and the ignominious death (as I then thought) of the ruder, but not less loved guide of my childhood, I escaped from the horrors which bewildered my young imagination, by playing the truant, and embarking on board a French vessel. With an Herculean strength for my age, I worked my passage to Bordeaux; where my mother's friend's heard my story, pitied, and received me. Her death ensued before the news of my safety arrived; and I was followed to France by my father, and placed in a seminary of a singular description, — one of those colleges which, under various names, have still perpetuated Jesuitism. Thence I was moved to a confraternity of a similar nature at Florence, under the inspection of the ex-superior of the Jesuits at Rome, my uncle, the celebrated Abbate O'Brien. This is no time to dwell upon my ideas, my sensations, during my residence under the tuition of the secret sons of Loyola. Indignation, disgust, an early discovery of the purposes for which I was so carefully educated, for which every acquirement, every accomplishment was pushed on me, drove me from the Italian Jesuits as I had

been driven from those of the diocesan school of St Grellan. Again I fled; entered a volunteer in an Austrian regiment at Milan; and by a success which has hitherto attended all my personal efforts, recommended myself to the notice of Maréchal Lacy. In recognizing a countryman, he discovered a relation. A commission followed; the most unmerited advancement procured me the friendship of the young, the gallant Charles de Ligne, and the paternal notice and protection of his father, the Prince. I served in various campaigns until the siege of Belgrade; when a communication which my father made, of the recovery of his title, and, as I supposed, of the means of supporting his rank, determined me to gratify the longing of my heart by returning to Ireland. His letters, like the character forced on him by circumstance, were a mixture of hyperbole and mystery. Deceiving himself, he deceived me; and an accident occurred at this epoch which wound up all my purposes to the sticking place.

„In that service where the discipline of the cane still marks the degradation of the soldier, the superior officers exercise an authority, the natural result of privilege. Insulted by one who formed but a link in this chain of slavery, I resented it, and challenged the offender: and on the point of sending in my resignation, I was broken for a breach of discipline. This

was unlucky, but it was inevitable; my conduct was justified by the testimony of the Prince de Ligne; who wrote a letter on the subject to my father, which I shall beg leave to put into your lordship's possession.

„In passing through France, I paused upon that great scene of human regeneration; and found my dear, my illustrious preceptor, the parish priest of St Grellan, the venerable Abbé O'Flaherty, a constitutional Bishop of France. Received into his palace, as the child of his adoption, I was presented by him to La Fayette, La Rochefoucauld, the Abbé Grégoire, Mirabeau, Ségur, and all that then and now constitute the glory of the nation. Three months' residence at such an epoch, and with such persons, did not, perhaps, exactly fit me for the country of my views and my aspirations; but I will not digress. Arrived in Ireland, and deceived by my unfortunate father, whose pride and tenderness alike concurred to conceal our mutual ruin, I mistook his habits of life, the very appearance of his antiquated dwelling, for mere eccentricity; and by much persuasion, induced him to enter me at the Irish University, and permitted him to do so under all 'the pomp and circumstance' of a *filius nobilis.* Soon, however, I discovered that he was utterly insolvent, deeply in debt; and that, to gratify my wishes, he had made the sacrifice of an old Irish crown and target of gold, supposed

to have been worn at the battle of Clontarf, by Brian Borrû; which he had purchased in the days of his opulence, when a thriving solicitor at St Grellan. From this moment I have never received a shilling at his hands; and, Lord Walter, to you alone I will confess it, 'I have coined my brain, not, alas! to drachmas, but into the merest means of subsistence.' Ireland has no literary existence. Still, '*The Anthologia*,' and the rising demand for political discussion in the pamphlet form, have opened a market for native talent. But with a false pride I cannot conquer, I have pursued my honourable vocation, as though it were a crime: how long I may be permitted to continue it with impunity, the law of libel, which is superseding all other law, must decide.

„I have only to add, that my father's ruin seems complete. What may be his intentions I know not, nor even, at this moment, where he is. It is through him that I so deeply feel this penalty of expulsion, which deprives me of the means of contributing to his future comforts.

„And now, Lord Walter, started into admiration of your character, by the exposition of principles so unexpected in one of your caste and class — anticipating the intimacy of years on the sudden prepossession of hours — won by the testimony of your interest and good-will— I have, for the first time in my life, pleaded guilty of that crime so abhorrent to proud

gentility — poverty; and I would have you to understand, that I accompany the avowal by a solemn and sacred assertion, that there exists not the human being (those connected by ties of blood alone excepted) from whom I would accept of pecuniary assistance. I should consider the offer an insult; and I would forfeit, for ever, the friendship of the man I most esteem — allow me to say of yourself — rather than avail myself of its ill-directed generosity.''

„My dear O'Brien," said Lord Walter, laughing, and pressing the arm on which he leaned, „spare your Rousseau-ish feelings, and diatribe against presuming friendship. We younger brothers of great families are, ourselves, but noble paupers, or stipendiaries of the state, which is obliged to provide for the exigencics of our enforced mendicity. If you will accept of nothing, *I* have nothing to offer: I have hitherto lived by my good sword; for the duke, my brother, is not on the right side, and cannot quarter his cadets on the people. Every thing you have said, from the confession of your 'truant disposition,' down to your romantic self-dependence, but deepens the interest I have long felt for you."

„Long felt!" re-echoed O'Brien, with surprise.

„Yes, long. I have read a pamphlet, of which you were the suspected author; I have watched your examinations in college; I have heard you in the Historical Society; I have

seen you at the head of your corps; I was witness of the spirited manner in which you conducted yourself at the castle; and all this has tended to confirm certain views with which I have been entrusted, and which have you for their object."

„Views on me, Lord Walter!" said O'Brien, with emotion.

„Ay, views: do not suppose that the papist and protestant Jesuits exclusively possess the secret of turning the talents of highly-gifted youth to their own purposes. There are other societies who have benefited by the hint, though not exactly with the same intentions. Why should not truth and freedom adopt an agency, which slavery and superstition have found so available? In a word, we Jesuits of the Union have, for some time, marked out you, and such as you, as our destined agents; and the ex-superior of Florence and Rome had not more direct designs on your brilliant endowments, than our brotherhood of United Irishmen. The attention of our society has, from its commencement, been directed to attaching to the great cause, young men of high promise, and vigour of body and mind; whose activity and talents may assist in disseminating throughout all Ireland that spirit of unity. which can alone work the redemption of the country. As an orator, I know you can, and as a writer, I am inclined to believe you may be of infinite service. There is, too, an ex-

tensive correspondence to be conducted with certain societies, organized upon similar principles with our own. Other agencies also are necessary; provincial and even baronial committees must be formed, and delegates must be appointed to carry on communications between the different branch associations and the great central point of union in the capital. For such missions, the time, the talents, the health, the energies, the pleasures of the volunteer must be sacrificed; and the hired officer of the despot of Austria need not blush to receive the honest remuneration earned in the service of his country. — Nay, hear me out! You have not conccaled from me that the descendant from the supreme kings of Ireland, has not now, in the land of his fathers, one rood of earth he can call his own. Your frankness has left me nothing to guess; and you must live — "

„Well," interrupted O'Brien, with a deep sigh, „of that, my lord, more hereafter; at present, what is the preliminary step in point of form to my true and only vocation?"

„To propose you to the society, as an ordinary member, which I will do this evening; for we meet for business at half-past eight. Every candidate must be proposed by one, and seconded by another member."

„And who is to be that other," asked O'Brien, „for I conclude your Lordship will do me the honour to propose me?"

„There are already some of your college

acquaintance among us; a sholar of the house, for instance. one who does the honours by your talents, and boasts of his intimacy with you, Cornelius Costello."

„He is a countryman of mine," said O'Brien, „and was my class-fellow in the diocesan school of St Grellan; but I have no intimacy with him. He is vulgar, trades too much on his principles, too obtrusive, pushing, pretending."

„Humph!" said Lord Walter. „Vulgar, perhaps, he is, but he is honest, — has been deemed eligible to become *des nôtres*. We must not refuse men, because they are vulgar, my dear O'Brien; *cela sent les côteries de Vienne*. I fear, after all, your continental liberalists look too much to revolutions *à l'eau rose*. Your young *preux*, Charles de Ligne, his princely and very aristocratic father, and others of the 'high transparencies' of the Austrian court, have spoiled you for the coarse efforts of Irishmen. But men, struggling to be free, must not wait for the co-operation of the graces."

„They are, however, no bad allies in any cause," said O'Brien. „Democracy *en petite maîtresse* is much more formidable than jacobinism *à la poissarde;* and Mad. Roland, the most influential female politician in Paris, is *la femme la mieux chaussée de son quartier*."

„Well," said Lord Walter, laughing, bring as many Mad. Rolands to our cause as you

can; you are the very person to recruit for us in that line. Apropos, what do you mean to do with Albina, Countess of Knocklofty?"

O'Brien started, so as to make Lord Walter start likewise.

„Do with her!—do with Lady Knocklofty? I do not understand you, my lord."

„Pooh! pooh! I do not want your secret, man, which, by the by, is no secret at all; the town is full of it. Only be on your guard. Lady Knocklofty is a fine woman still, and to very young men, a very seducing woman; but then a man must be *young indeed*; and *I* was once '*very*, *very*, *very*, young. Though, with all her faults and frailties, she has some good points; and while her fancy lasts, she is capable of the most romantic enterprize, and the most generous sacrifice — as charming woman ever is, under the influence of particular excitements. I know her — I know

Il suo mobile ingegno.
Usato amare, ed a disamare a un punto.

Trust her no further than as it leads to no consequence to yourself, or to others; and observe, keep clear of politics."

„Good God!" said O'Brien, „do not suppose — I am not aware — upon my honour and soul, I have not seen Lady Knocklofty since that foolish frolic of the Castle, and——"

„That is not the point," said Lord Walter, interrupting him; „only remember, she is

the wife of the man by whose instigation the persecution of your principles, if not of your person, is carrying on."

„But she is herself adverse to the principles of her party, opposite as day and night."

„Oh! she has come to *that* with you already, has she?" said Lord Walter, laughing. „You have yet to learn that all the wives of these oligarchs have a tendency to liberal principles, wherever liberal principles are professed by the most gifted, and (generally speaking) the best looking young men in Ireland. Lady Knocklofty visited young Macartney in Kilmainham, while under sentence of transportation for a libel on her husband's friend, the Chancellor; and the three Ladies O'Blarney *clubbed* their pocket-money to treat the Captain of the White Boys in his dungeon, after sentence of death had been passed on him. Women, who are in their habits and feelings aristocrats, *jusqu'au bout du doigt*, may *talk* sentimental whiggism and poetical democracy; but power and supremacy are their idols; and they will cling to those who possess both, even though they should be—their own husbands."

O'Brien laughed, and said, „*Vous parlez en homme qui connaît son monde.*"

„Exactly," said Lord Walter. „Apropos, you are of course going to the fancy ball at Knocklofty House to-night?"

„I have been invited, and have accepted the

invitation; but in my present position, with my present feelings ——"

„What has your position to do with a mask and domino? Remember 'Democracy *en petite maîtresse.*' The conspiracy of Fiesco was forwarded amidst the gaieties of a masked ball. So I propose that when we step out of the den in Back-lane, where our 'union' meet, we turn into the first masquerade shop we find on our way, and—but first where do you dine? You are too late for commons; let us go to Daly's, it is so close."

O'Brien agreed, and the illustrious united Irishman and his neophyte proceeded forthwith arm in arm to the „Brook's" of the Irish capital. As they passed the library square, a few of the students were gathered in little groups at varions points. At sight of O'Brien and his noble friend, they took off their caps, and (though Dr Barrett, the college Bursar, was looking from his window upon the scene) cheered them as they passed, singing in chorus:

Wooden sons of the board, let us join hand in hand,
'Tis ours to discourage the youth of the land,
Nor ever permit them, like us, to entwine
The myrtle of Venus with Bacchus's vine. *

O'Brien returned the salute; his spirits rose with this courageous testimony of good will and admiration; and the *petit couvert* and Bur-

---

* Part of a song, about this time, popular in college.

gundy of his friendly Amphitryon, contributed to the gradual dispersion of that weight and gloom, which so readily dissipate from the elastic spirits of the youthful and the sanguine.

After an hour given to the necessary refreshment of the table, the two friends parted till their appointed *rendezvous* at the Tailor's Hall in Back Lane, where the United Irishmen held their meetings. Lord Walter returned home to dress; and O'Brien went back, for the last time, to college, to put up his papers, books, and clothes, that they might be in readiness when he could send for them, to the Galway Coffeehouse inJames's-street, — a customary haunt of his father, kept by one of Lord Arranmore's Connaught cousins, a gentleman bred and born, and of *half tribe*. Here O'Brien was certain that he could have shelter, till something definite could be decided for his future existence; and here alone there was a likelihood of meeting with his father.

When he returned to college, it was perfectly dark; and the few lamps which are destined to light the squares, were not yet lighted. As he entered the gloomy stone passage of his chambers; two figures wrapped in long mantles passed him down the stairs; the one, though doubly concealed by a cloak and darkness, was evidently a woman. Such visitants, at such hours, though strictly forbidden, were not

wholly unusual in the university; and O'Brien drew up, to let the strangers pass; and then hurried on to his rooms.

He had locked the door in going forth; but when he now opened it, he was surprised to see the fire burning brightly, and the green wax taper on the writing desk still half extinguished, and sending forth a tiny stream of smoke. He relighted it; and his amazement increased to find his papers and books collected, tied up, and directed to the Galway Coffee-house, his clothes smoothed into his valise, and a sealed letter directed to him on the table. He opened it, in great trepidation, and read as follows:

„Since there exists not on earth that human being from whom you would accep[t] pecuniary assistance, save those connected *with you by ties of blood*, one who claims the privilege you have admitted begs to administer to your present wants, by desiring your acceptance of the inclosed.“

The letter fell to the ground; the inclosure remained in O'Brien's hand, — it was a bank bill for fifty pounds. He remained for many minutes lost in the confusion of utter astonishment. He had locked his chamber door, — the key was in his pocket — his father only had a duplicate key. The mysterious visitant had evidently but just departed, for the seal of the letter was still warm. The words, too,

which he had repeated in whispering confidence but an hour before to Lord Walter, were in this very letter repeated, and the most generous advantage taken of them. Yet all around him in the park had been silent and solitary. In the adjoining alley to that in which he had conversed with Lord Walter, he had for a moment fancied that he had perceived a shadowy figure walking to and fro, but it seemed to have passed away into a close walk, which opened by a private door in Nassau-street; and he had taken in for granted that it was some of the junior fellows who had the privilege of a key. There was a well-timed dexterity in this agency, an alertness, a sort of dramatic or fairy trickery, which struck on his imagination by its subtlety, ingenuity, and prompt execution. This was surely a woman's act; for the hand, though disguised, was a woman's: and what woman in Ireland was interested for him, if not her, who, however, „*mobile il suo ingegno*," was yet „capable of the most generous sacrifice!" But then, there was a claim of propinquity and blood. There was, however, almost a certainty that his father was of the party: he alone had the means of ingress. The muffled persons he had met on the stairs were the probable; but then Lady Knocklofty in alliance with his father! and prowling about the college park, on the night of her own fancy ball,—on the night

of that day, on which her friend, the Vice-Chancellor, had condemned him to expulsion! This was too fanciful, too romantic, too wild, to admit of a moment's credence: the mystery was unfathomable! Still, however, in the whole embroglio, in the fantastic agency, the mysterious, invisible, and flattering superintendance of himself and his fortunes, there was something so gracious to his feelings, so consonant to his strongly imaginative disposition, that it operated like a philtre on his mind and spirits. There was yet another influence connected with the complicated intrigue. It reminded him of carnival adventures in Italy. His impetuous and eager passions had, more than once, plunged him into difficulties, during those saturnalia, from which he had been extricated by means as fantastic, as those under the influence of which he was now acting. Much leisure, however, was not left him for these reflections; time was hurrying on, his hours were counted. The college clock had struck eight, ere he had quite finished his toilette; and when he had made the arrangements for giving up his rooms, given his orders for the removal of his luggage, and surrendered his key to the porter who acted as *maréchal de logis*, he hid a last adieu to Alma Mater, and turned his steps towards the Tailors's Hall in Back-lane.

CHAPTER III.

THE UNITED IRISHMAN.

Whenever the legislators endeavour to take away, or destroy the property of the people, or to reduce them to slavery, under arbitrary power, they put themselves into a state of war with the people; who are thereupon absolved from any further obedience, and are left to the common refuge which God hath provided against force and violence.

LOCKE *on Government.*

Sin va Rinaldo, dove l'amor l'invita.

ARIOSTO.

BACK-LANE, the site where liberty had for the first time raised her fane in Ireland, after ages had passed over her ruined altars, is one of those narrow, dirty, and close defiles of the old quarter of Dublin, which still represent the great streets of great capitals in those good old times, which genius in the pay of despotism endeavoured to revive. In such thickly populated and ill ventilated „*vicoli*," the plague was propagated, and fires were kindled, to be extinguished only after an extensive loss of the lives and properties of the inhabitants. The wisdom of our ancestors, who saw no inconvenience in what their fathers had borne, and

admitted no remedy that came in the form of innovation, continued to reject, with equal tenacity, wide streets and innoculation: as equally subversive of social order, and opposed to God's providence in the government of the world.*

Back-lane, inhabited only by coarse mechanics, and petty shopkeepers, had, in the early part of the century, been chosen, as an appropriate spot for erecting a catholic college for the education of catholic youth. But the intolerant spirit of the times forbad the accom-

---

* The narrowness of streets derives from two sources. In the south of Europe, the object sought was shade. In the more northern regions, the necessity for inclosing walls to protect the towns, led to a similar mode of architecture. The taste for fresh air is, notwithstanding, an acquirement of civilization; and, like all other such acquirements, has been opposed by the organic tendency to imitation of the species, and by the stupid servile dread of innovation, artificially engendered by its teachers and misleaders. Not that any direct effort has been made to prohibit ventilation; because no corrupt interest has stood in its way; but timidity and self-distrust, once begotten by a bad system of religious and political education, sheds its baleful influence over the whole range of human thought. It is curious to remark, that England, the most fanatical and bigotted country in Europe, has likewise opposed itself, with the greatest obstinacy, to the practice of vaccination. The native land of Jenner lies open as much to the ridicule of Europe, for its imbecility respecting its ultra attachment to small-pox, as it does respecting its ultra apprehension of catholic emancipation.

plishment of this purpose; and the melancholy and monastic building, shut up in a narrow court, remained unappropriated, till it was purchased by the Corporation of Tailors; when the master's name was ostentatiously traced in the ironwork of the gateway, to the dark and narrow passage that leads to it.

O'Brien, wrapped up in a Roman *ferrajuolo* (the remains of his foreign toilet), had picked his way as he might, through the then always dirty avenue of Skinner-row, High-street, and Nicholas-street; to the utter detriment of slight pumps and silk stockings. More than once, as he applied his musked handkerchief to his nose, to cover the noxious exhalations of this region of new-born freedom, he recalled the assemblies at which he had been present, for the promotion of a similar cause, amidst the orange groves of Versailles, and the scented atmosphere of the *Jeu de Paume;* and the thought that the men who struggled for liberty in Back-lane had much greater merit, than those who congregated round her banner in the *Champs-Elysées*, and the *Jardin du Luxembourg*.

The graphic and jocular description given of the *rendezvous* of United Irishmen, by Lord Walter during their dinner, left O'Brien in no difficulty in making his way to it. The ill-scented passage which led to the place of meeting, was no further lighted than by the feeble rays of a dim lamp, suspended in the inner

court; and it was so narrow and so dark, that he pushed against some person, who appeared to stand against its wall, at the entrance. O'Brien muttered a hasty apology; and was answered by the invocation of „Charity, for Christ's sake." There was something in the tone of voice in which this was uttered, which struck him to the heart. It was wholly unlike the drawling, whining, turgid supplications of the Dublin beggars. It had even an inflexion to which his ear was familiar; and it induced him to step back and search for his purse, light as it was. He had, however, left it in his writing-desk; but he found some silver, or what he took for silver, at the bottom of his waistcoat pocket; and he silently dropped a piece into the extended hand of the supplicant, and passed on. A simple, but most emphatic „God bless you" still rung in his ear, and on his heart, as he crossed the little court, and ascended the steps of the Tailor's-hall; when it again struck him that the voice was familiar to him; and, at the same moment, as if by some sudden association, he was awakened to the conviction that the offering he had made to the mendicant, was a small gold coin of very ancient date, which he had purchased a week before, with some silver medals, to present to his father; but which he had left in the waistcoat he now wore. He was the more certain of this, on reflecting that the piece he

had given was much too heavy for a shilling. He immediately turned back to overtake the mendicant, but he was gone; and being already beyond the time of his own appointment, he again entered the dreary building, whose dusky hall, and broad, low stairs were only lighted by a tallow candle, held in the hand of an old woman, whom the noise of his footsteps had brought out of a desolate, unfurnished room, on the right of the entrance. He inquired if Lord Walter was arrived.

„Och! yes, indeed," she replied, turning her red eyes up to his face, „this quarter of an hour or more; and bid ye be shown up to the committee-room, when ye came (if you are the young gentleman he expected), and to let him know. This a-way, if you be plazed."

O'Brien followed her up the creaking stairs, into a room on the landing place, where, laying down her candle on a long fixture table, she said „Wait a taste, and as soon as his lordship is done spaking — for the society is sitting on business — I'll let him know." She then disappeared.

There was something particularly dreary in this „committee-room." Its fireless grate was concealed by a large, ill-painted picture, representing a shivering and naked wretch, standing near a person seated on a tailor's shopboard, and cutting out a piece of cloth. O'Brien held the light down to it, and read an inscrip-

tion, intimating that it was the portrait of „J. Homodon, of Cremona, a tailerer, who gave all his gaine and labour to the poore. Canonized in his time for his miracles by Pope Innocent the Third." It was one of those atrocious representations of humanity given by the inferior painters of the early Italian schools, which sink the spirits to look at; and Murrogh soon turned away, and seating himself at the table, took up a torn Magazine which lay before him. Chilled, spiritless, and impatient for Lord Walter's appearance, he was glad of any resource to while away the time.

The first thing he hit upon, as (beating a tattoo with his feet), he turned over the leaves, was „Thoughts on Prudence."

„Prudence is a quality of the human mind"... „What stupid nonsense," he said, turning over several leaves at once, till he lighted on „Reflections by Moonlight," — „Poetry of the Masque of *Ma Chère Amie*," — „Fashionable Pattern for working a Flounce," — „Private Theatricals at Knocklofty House." This fixed his attention; and he read with almost audible utterance, „The drama has ever been a part of elegant literature; and indeed, all the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely actors, as the immortal Shakspeare has it, etc. etc., etc., which leads to the brilliant exhibition of dramatic talent displayed at the private theatricals of Knocklofty House, on Monday

the 4th instant. The play was the Beggar's Opera, followed by the Sultan. The principal characters were, the Countess Knocklofty, as Roxalana, and Captain O'Mealy as Macheath, which was allowedly given in the most capital style. It would be idle to comment on the Captain's theatricals excellence, for Madam Fame has taken that pleasing task upon herself. But we must say, his attitudes were imposing, his voice mighty melodious, and his manner of giving — 'the charge is prepared,' was....."

Here a murmur of voices, which seemed to come from some adjoining room, interrupted the perusal of this evidently autographic criticism on the merit of Captain O'Mealy. O'Brien distinctly heard the voice of Lord Walter, speaking in a sustained tone. He arose and perceived that the sound proceeded from a door, just sufficiently opened, to discover that it gave entrance to a balcony, which dominated a somewhat spacious apartment, whence the murmur of voices issued.

As he looked down, there was something in the little senate he saw assembled, so picturesque, that its members seemed ready grouped for the purpose of a well-sketched conspiracy; and a single lamp (falling from the centre, and only dispersing the gloom of that part of the apartment over which it immediately hung) concentrated its yellow light upon heads and busts that recalled the „*grande quadro*" of Salvator's pride and glory.

At the head of the table, which occupied the centre of the apartment, and in an arm-chair raised by a few steps from the floor, sat the President of the society of United Irishmen. He alone was covered, and though plainly dressed, there was an air of high breeding and distinction about him; while in his bland smile were exhibited, the open physiognomy of pleasantness, and love-winning mildness, which still mark the descendants of the great Anglo-Norman Lords of the Pale, the Lords of Ormond, Orrery, and Arran the Mount Garrets, and Kilkennys, — in former times the great oligarchs of Ireland, and in times more recent, the grace and ornament of the British Court.

The president was the Honourable Simon Butler: beside him, on a lower seat, sat the secretary. His uncovered head, and unshaded temples received the full light of the suspended lamp. It was one of those finely chiselled heads, which arrest the imagination, and seem to bear incontrovertible evidence of the certainty of physiognomical science. A dress particularly studied, was singularly contrasted with the athletic figure and antique bearing of this interesting looking person. For though unpowdered locks, and the partial uncovering of a muscular neck, by the loose tie of the silk handkerchief, had something of the simplicity of republicanism, yet the fine diamond that sparkled at the shirt breast, and the glit-

tering of two-chains (the foppery of the day), exhibited an aristocracy of toilet, which did not exactly assort with the Back-lane graces. The secretary of the United Irishmen, was Archibald Hamilton Rowan.

On the opposite side sat a small, well-formed, and animated person, who was talking with singular vivacity of look and gesture, to one of extremely placid and even formal appearance. The first was the gay, gallant, and patriotic founder of the society, Theobold Wolfe Tone; the other was the celebrated and clever Doctor Drennan, a skilful physician, and an elegant writer, who might have passed, in appearance, for the demure minister of some remote village-congregation of the Scotch kirk.

A tall, elegant, and sentimental looking person sat near to them, in an attitude of interested attention, listening to the speaker, to whom, it seemed, he was about to reply. It was Thomas Addas Emmet, the son of the state physician of Ireland, — then a young lawyer of great promise, and now the Attorney-General of New York. The handsome and animated Dr Mackenna, one of the most popular writers of the day, and Oliver Bond, the representative of the most reputable class of merchants, had grouped forward their intelligent heads; while one who brought no personal beauty to the cause * (that letter of recommendation to

* When Napper Tandy was mentioned in the House

all causes), James Napper Tandy, stood waiting with a packet of letters, which he had received in his former quality of secretary to the meeting.

While other leaders of the union, distinguished for their birth, talents, or principles (and it is remarkable that they were all protestants),* filled up the seats near the head of the table; more mixed groups less distinguished by the *beau sang*, which then came forth, in the fine forms of the genuine Irish gentry of both sects, were congregated in the obscurity of the bottom of the room. Here might be seen the square set forms, the strongly marked, but less noble features of the Scotch colonists of Ulster, the stern brow of uncompromising presbyterianism, contrasting to the mobile, varying muscle, of trodden down catholicism; the latter drawling forth its plaintive discontents, the former announcing its immoveable resolutions.

At the moment when O'Brien was taking a

---

of Commons as participating in the proceedings of the United Irishmen, a flippant young lawyer, then unknown to fame, got up, and in allusion to his ugliness, observed, „that he was sorry the society could not put a better face on it." Such were the jokes which then had their value in the Senate, and smoothed the path of the facetious utterer to nearly the highest judicial eminence.

* Of the twenty United Irishmen confined at Forth St George, four only were catholics.

rapid glance at this singular and picturesque association, Lord Walter, who stood near Hamilton Rowan, was speaking, and in the act of pronouncing the following sentence: „Since this society is constituted for the purpose of forming a brotherhood and a community of rights among Irishmen of every religious persuasion, thereby to obtain a complete constitutional reform in the legislature, founded on the principles of civil, political, and religious liberty, I beg to propose one whose — "

Here O'Brien instantly closed the door of the balcony, and reseated himself by the flaring tallow candle, that was now fast burning down into its socket, resumed his perusal of the transcendant dramatic merits of Captain O'Mealy, and got through the whole „Thoughts on Prudence," without one thought on the subject, — when a sudden burst of applause reached his ear from the hall; and the next moment Lord Walter entered the room, and shaking him heartily by the hand, said, „You have been proposed and received with acclamation. Our friend, Costello, was not here to second you as he promised; but Emmet is my fellow sponsor, for all the good things promised and vowed in your name. You have been elected without a single black ball, and nothing now remains but the form of taking the test."

The two young friends, arm-in-arm, then descended the stairs, and entered the hall together:

and never did two finer representatives of the Anglo-Norman and Milesian races of Ireland present themselves at the shrine of national independence. All made way for them, as they passed on towards the president's chair; and there was a murmur of approbation and applause, so little consonant to the wonted sobriety and awful purpose of the meeting, that the president rose from his seat, and took off his hat. At this signal, silence and order were instantly restored; and the next moment all were seated, save the neophite and his sponsors, who stood between the secretary and chairman, when the test was presented for O'Brien's perusal. On his assenting to its purport, the whole society arose and stood uncovered, while the candidate, stepping forward, read aloud as follows:

„I, Murrogh O'Brien, in the presence of God, do pledge myself to my country that I will use all my abilities and influence in the attainment of an impartial and adequate representation of the Irish nation in Parliament; and as a means of absolute and immediate necessity in the establishment of this chief good of Ireland, I will endeavour, as much as lies in my ability, to forward a brotherhood of affection, an identity of interests, and a communion of rights, and a union of power among Irishmen of all religious persuasions; without which every reform in Parliament must be par-

tial, not national, inadequate to the wants, delusive to the wishes, and insufficient for the freedom and happiness of this country.

„I do further declare, that neither hopes, fears, rewards, nor punishments shall ever induce me, directly or indirectly, to inform on, or give evidence against any member or members of this or similar societies, for any act or expression of theirs done or made, collectively or individually, in or out of this society, in pursuance of the spirit of this obligation."

O'Brien was then introduced to the principal members present, and having accepted the situation of secretary to a baronial committee for St Grellan, in the province of Connaught, he took his leave of the society for the night, with his friend Lord Walter. Leaving the elder members to pursue the dry details of business, which have nothing to do with the *poetry* of freedom, he jumped into Lord Walter's carriage, which was drawn up at the end of the lane; and heard, with something like the heart-beat of pleasure, his order to the servant to drive to Tweedie and Lindsay's, in Parliament-street.*

„My servant," said his Lordship, drawing up the glasses, to exclude the noisome smells that came „between the wind and his nobility;"

---

* The Howell and James of Dublin in those days.

„my servant is already there chusing us pilgrim's robe, like that of charity, covers a multitude of sins — that is, the sins of dullness and inaptitude to the noisy pleasures we are about to plunge into."

„A propos to your man," said O'Brien; „he did not came for your great-coat, and you mentioned that he would."

„I quite forgot it," said Lord Walter, „when once my mind was at rest about those cursed papers, which I feared might affect you."

„And which," said O'Brien, „to a certain point, did affect me. It is now all over; but the fact is, those papers were taken out of my supposed pocket by the familiars of our inquisition, and were read at the board. Wild, incoherent, and ruinous to the happiness of Ireland, they were so ill-written, that I believe I stood exonerated from their composition by my judges; but they affected not to credit the assertion of my ignorance of their existence. At all events you are not even suspected; and I fancy you must be content to make a sacrifice of the coat in order to continue so; for it would be folly in you, Lord Walter, to draw upon yourself suspicions, which would injure the cause in which you are embarked, without producing any good whatever."

„Good God!" said Lord Walter, in great trepidation, „can you suppose that I will suffer you — is it possible that — "

„You cannot force me to reveal what I have just sworn to conceal," said O'Brien, emphatically. „The oath is still warm in the records of liberty, and I have promised, in the awful presence of God, that neither hope nor fear—"

„You are a noble fellow, O'Brien; but this must not be."

„At least," said O'Brien, „this is not the time to argue on the needlessness and folly of betraying a friend to no purpose. That you were made the confidant of such foolish and treasonable designs, as the having such papers committed to your care would intimate, could not serve the great cause in which you have embarked; though it might serve the purposes of your enemies, and the enemies of Ireland, to ascertain the fact of your so having them, on the credit of your own testimony."

„I am now convinced," said Lord Walter, musing, „that my suspicions respecting the person who forced those papers on me are well founded. He is the intimate friend of another member of the union, whose name, if I am not deceived, is yet destined to reach posterity under the execration which follows treachery in all ages."

Lord Walter then sunk back in the carriage, and remained silent and thoughtful, as one ill at ease with himself; while O'Brien, affecting, or feeling an elation of spirits, which scarcely belonged to his position, talked at

random, and dropping the window-glass, amused himself with the questions and observations of the thickly gathering crowds, who had already began their usual inquiry on masquerade nights in Dublin, of „What's your charackther?“ The carriage drew up before what would now be called a mart, magazine, temple of fashion, or physitechnicon; but which, then, simply indicated itself as the shop of Tweedie and Lindsay, haberdashers. All the resignation that time can bestow from its experience, or philosophy boast as the result of its maxims and tenets, youth, in its brilliant petulance of temperament, gives in a superior degree. O'Brien's spirits had already flung off their load, „his bosom's lord sat lightly on its throne;“ and, more than reconciled to his fate, he had forgotten it. Springing into the gay temple of fantastic folly, and reflected on by the brilliant lights that illuminated its altars, and not a little, perhaps, by the pretty priestesses who served them, he walked about in pleased and idle curiosity; almost fancying himself at Venice or at Rome, in the height of the carnival. Taking up and flinging down crooks and crosiers, cowls for monks, and crowns for kings, party-coloured jackets for harlequins, and ermine gowns for judges, he collected the materials for dressing his own character; and robing himself in pilgrim's weeds, „fixed the scollop in his hat before,“

and left his address at the Galway Coffee-house, that his trappings and their hire might be sent for in the morning.

Miss Lindsay, who had in the mean time dressed Lord Walter, reminded him that, though masks were not admitted at Knocklofty House, every other species of disguise was allowed, which was necessary to top the character, by colouring faces up to the disguise. Rouge, ochre, burned cork, beards, brows, mustachoes and noses, and all the artful *et caetera* of the masquerading toilet were then furnished; and O'Brien undertook to officiate as the artist. When he had made up his own face, as a sample of his skill, he exhibited a perfect and beautiful model of the pilgrim of the Abruzzi, on his way to the shrine of Loretto, — to-night, a stern bandit of the Pontine marshes; to-morrow; the penitent wiping off by prayers and vigils, the crimes he had committed without pity and without remorse; his fierceness still beating on his bent brow, and flashing from his dark eye.

„No," said Lord Walter, looking admiringly upon him, „I cannot compete with that; for though

From Toscane came our worthy race,

and

Fair Florence was some time our ancient seat,*

my Anglo Norman blood, has so weakened my

---

* Lord Surrey's Sonnet to « the Celestial Geraldine. »

Italian, that my appearance can never assimilate with your Milesian colouring and countenance. The utmost I cau aspire to is Goldsmith's 'Gentle Hermit of the Dale the loveIorn Edwin.' So, my dear Miss Lindsay, a pale, amber-coloured beard, if you please; and pray give me a robe of more tender tint, that the contrast with my friend's brown and scarlet may be more striking."

The two young men, completely, though differently equipped for the same character, and equally dramatic in their appearance, again entered their carriage, and drove on to Knocklofty House, laughing and light-hearted, as if the one had not been that day expelled, and cast friendless and fortuneless upon the world; or the other had not just issued from that misprision of treasonable cabal, the society of United Irishmen, — where he was about to risk all that made life pleasurable, in search of the uncertain good, his generous sacrifice might bring to his unhappy country. In this rapid transition of feeling, this sudden change of objects, this versatility of thought, passion, and pursuit, there was much of youth, in all its heyday of the blood and fancy; and not a little of what is Irish, in the full development of the national temperament, — of that morbid sensibility to external impressions, which kindles at a sun-beam and sinks beneath the shadow of a cloud.

In driving down Capel-street, the carriage was surrounded and cheered at every step, by that most licentious, but most cheerful and humorous of all congregations — a Dublin mob. The answer to the reiterated question of „What's your charackter?“ „pilgrims from *Crogh-Patrick*,“ was received with loud acclamation. Pilgrims in real life, were then common in Ireland; and the staff and cross were plausible and approved badges of beggary, by which many made a livelihood, extracting from credulous bigotry what charity might have denied.

In Ireland even the public pleasures and amusements smack of that disorder and coercion, which in all bad governments act and re-act on each other; giving to licensed festivity the character of suspicion and terror. Groups of military, mounted and dismounted, filled every street, and mingled with the fearless and vociferous mob. At once harmless and incontrollable, the people were permitted to annoy the passenger, by opening the carriage doors, and in some instances obliging the masks to come out, show themselves, and explain and describe their „charackters.“ The license thus granted, or rather assumed, as a prescriptive right by the populace, is rarely exceeded, except when the persons questioned resist with insolence and hauteur, and refuse to gratify the curiosity they have awakened.

Then occasionally scuffles ensue, and riots, leading to dangerous consequences, occur.

The vehicle which immediately preceded Lord Walter's carriage was filled by the officers of the Prince's Own; and being stopped by the mob, they replied to the accustomed vociferations, by a command to „Shut the door, you rascals," and „drive on, coachman, at your peril."

„Droive an!" reiterated a leader of the fun, with an imitation of the English accent. „Och then, sorrow step you'll stir, nor droive an neither, till you show yourselves, honies, and tell us your charackters:" and he forcibly opened the door, and let down the steps of the carriage.

The rage of the military occupants of the vehicle, which now knew no bounds, was expressed in a manner so violent and insulting, that the mob, under the influence of their *saturnalia*, were about to commence an assault; when suddenly catching a glimpse of the uniforms, they shut up the steps and closed the door, exclaiming in a humorous tone of utter contempt, „Och, the poor craturs, let 'em alone. Shure, it's only th' officers, that have no charackters at all. Drive on, coachy."

Another carriage now drew up a-breast of Lord Walter's in which some fantastic figure was amusing the persons without, by replies in consonance with their own peculiar humour.

Shouts of laughter and „Musha, long life," followed every reply.

„You see," said Lord Walter, „they are in excellent temper now. This is some person *au fait* to the national humour."

„Long life to you, Mar'ram. Success to your ladyship! All happiness!" exclaimed a variety of broguing voices. „Aisy, now, aisy; don't you hear the lady is spaking? And it's all what we ax to know now, Madam, is, what's your charackter?"

„Gran-uaile," replied a sweet voice, in that rich, mellifluous brogue which is only heard on the right side of the Shannon; „being returned from a long voyage, and finding no hospitality at the gates of Howth Castle, I'm come to ask the '*caed mille faltha*' from you."

„Och! then, and you shall have it a thousand times over," was the general exclamation; for all understood this allusion to a popular tradition; „and it's on the necks of our hearts we'll draw you every step, and we'll give you a stave of your own song, any how."

The carriage then passed on, accompanied by the mob, joining in the chorus of the then popular air of Granuaile; which, like the *lillebulero*, had not long before been applied to political purposes, with great popular effect.

„That's a clever creature, whoever she is," said Lord Walter, as they were now permitted to drive on. „She knows how to play with

the Irish temper; I should suspect that Granuaile and Lady Honoria were one and the same person, but that the accent is purely Irish.

„And the voice much too melodious," said O'Brien. „Lady Honoria's is particularly harsh and wiry. There was something peculiarly sweet in the tone of that voice, and it struck me that it had a foreign accent."

The flaring flambeaux fixed over the gates of Knocklofty House, announced the scene of festivity; but there were so many carriages to set down before that of Lord Walter and O'Brien, that they alighted; and hustled and bustled as they might, through a multitude of footmen, policemen, coachmen, chairmen, and a mob, which not even a party of the Royal Irish, with swords drawn, and with denunciations as formidable, could keep back. In the general scuffle, O'Brien got separated from Lord Walter; but still pushing on, with a flutter of the heart, in which anxiety for his friend had no part, he soon cleared the court, and entered the illuminated and garlanded hall; where a military band completed the enchantment of the fairy scene. A servant stationed at a door to the left of the entrance, informed him that it was a dressing-room, appropriated to such gentlemen as chose to change their dress, in the course of the evening; the room on the opposite side being devoted for the same purpose to the ladies.

„This is indeed in the true carnival spirit," observed O'Brien; and he thought of Italy, and of the proconsular government of the dull Austrians, over that region of the imagination; whose natives, like those of Ireland, thus twine their chains with flowers, and in the amusements of an hour, forget the wrongs of an age.

He now looked around him, but looked in vain for Lord Walter. Groups of commonplace characters were rushing in, on all sides; but he was struck by the singular appearance of two figures, which issued from the ladies' 'tiring-room on the left of the hall. That they were female, was only apparent by a certain graceful fulness of the bust, and by the fairy feet that twinkled in silken sandals, beneath a robe, which fell in full straight folds, from neck to ancle, circled only at the waist by a rope, supporting a cross and rosary. The head and neck were enveloped in the frightful *cappa* of the *confraternità de' penitenti*, which (with its horned termination, and two apertures seamed with black for the eyes) was the habit *à la rigueur* of the males and females of the confraternities of Italy. Such personages were familiar to O'Brien, attending the „*predica in piazza*," of every Italian town; and devoting themselves, from penitence or piety, to certain acts of grace and humiliation, performed in this deepest of all disguises, —

disguises invented by the church to carry on its great scheme of human prostration, without shocking too deeply the *amour propre* of its dupes.

The whole of this singular and truly Italian costume, from the cappa to the sandals, was of a deep rose red; like that worn by the „*assistanti*" of Ischia, whose procession forms so conspicuous a part in the celebration of the jubilee at Naples.

The *Penitente* brushed lightly by O'Brien!, and ascended the staircase immediately before him; but they were stopped on the corridor which led to the apartments, by a group of gentlemen, who seemed to have stationed themselves there, for the exclusive purpose of annoying the company, and interrupting the course of the evening's pleasures. Evidently inebriated, they were no otherwise *disguised*, than according to the Irish acceptation of the phrase; though the uniform they wore, gave them a singularity of appearance, which, any where but in Dublin, would have served the purposes of a masquerade. Their whole dress, including their stockings, was of a bright flame colour, save only their coat, which, lined with flame coloured silk, was of black cloth. They were the leading members of the Cherokee Club, the last successors to the „Hell Fires," the „Devil's Owns," and „Pinking Dindies," of more barbarous and more fierce times. Flush-

ed and flashy as they appeared, there were among them, some of the most fashionable members of the Irish *beau monde;* Lords Kilcolman, Kilmainham, and Kilshandra, were prominent personages in the group; while Sir Phelim O'Flynn, with a long white wand, staggered about, crying „Order, order," in the most disorderly manner; and Captain O'Mealy, dressed as Father Paul, affected to be the chaplain of the society, and intonated at intervals, over a goblet he held in his hand,

This bottle 's the sun of our table;
Its beams are rosy wine;
We, planets that are not able,
Without its light, to shine.

Many groups, as they ascended, and passed this formidable out-post, played them off in their own way, with all that ready but local humour, which, like other indigenous productions of Ireland, thrives best on its own soil. The appearance of the two Italian penitents, characters out of the common muster-roll of Irish masquerading, excited a considerable sensation among the Cherokees; who advanced to meet, and to surround them with a boisterous curiosity, and a characteristic war-whoop, that intimidated the penitents, till they shrank back, so as almost to oblige O'Brien to back also.

One of them, either in fear or in character, exclaimed, „*Hei mihi, quia incolatus meus prolongatus est.*"

„*Non amplius quam placebit*," replied O'Brien to this singular apostrophe, which both struck amused him; and, offering an arm to either lady, he added, in English, „Holy sisters, allow a brother of your community, and a participator in your vocation, to offer you his aid against those obstacles, which the enemy of mankind opposes to your progress, to the shrine of our common devotion."

The fair penitents still held back, though one of them uttered a „*grazie tante, Signor Pellegrino*," while O'Mealy, without recognizing O'Brien (for, though seeing double, he saw none the clearer), sung out —

It was a friar, of orders grey,
Went forth to tell his beads;
And he met with a lady fair,
Clad in a pilgrim's weeds.

„A lady fair!" cried Sir Phelim O'Flynn, who, with the rest of the party, had drawn up so as to prevent all ingress to the anti-room. „How the devil have you found out that, Father Paul? Leave a monk alone for finding out a pretty girl: I'll be hanged if I did not take these outlandish figures for Egyptian mummies, or a new reading of blind man's buff. Pray, ladies, what's your character?"

„*Siamo penitenti rosse, della confraternità d'Ischia, in grande penitenza, alla santa casa*," replied one of the ladies, the most elegantly formed of the two.

„We'll throuble you for change for that, Signora," said O'Mealy, in his broadest tone of vulgarity, whispering Lord Kilshandra; „give you my honour its the *Bona fillola* of the Opera in Capel-street, I know her by her pretty little pasterns — smoke the foot."

O'Brien, infinitely disgusted with the coarse, mistaken humour of the party, translated the Pilgrim's answer to ears not so familiar with their dialect as his own. „They are saintly women, of the order of the red penitents of Ischia, pilgrims to the shrine of Loretto. So pray, good christians, impede not their pious progress, as you hope for remission of your own sins and peccadillos by prayer and penitence."

„Then, if that's the case," hiccuped Lord Kilcolman, looking earnestly at O'Brien, as if endeavouring to make out who he was, „they don't pass here. We have papists enough already; and so, Signor Friar, I advise you to be off, and join your popish banditti in the south."

„Oh! for the friar," interrupted Lord Kilshandra, „he has leave to quit; but we must not part with the sisterhood. Such pretty papist feet as these would find footing any where; for prettier never trod the boards, abroad or at home;" and, whispering Lord Kilcolman, he added, „so make way for the sisters —

If to their faith some popish errors fall,
Look at their feet, and you 'll forget them all."

„Oh! that alters the case," stammered Lord Kilcolman; „for though I suspect this pilgrim is the most dangerous papist that ever came amongst us, since St Patrick; and though I am the protestant St Peter — (hiccup) — and keep the keys of — (hiccup) —"

„The cellar," interrupted the dangerous papist; and a general laugh followed the observation.

Lord Kilcolman, easily irritated, by wit or opposition, as the dull and the drunken always are, exclaimed, inarticulately, „Cellar or no cellar, I am, at all events, so far like the papist St Peter, and his representative the Pope, that I must be bribed well, and sell my place in Paradise to the highest bidder—"

„As you did your place in Parliament," replied the penitent. „What is your price, now?"

The allusion to Lord Kilcolman's recent disposal of his venal voice in one house, and of his borough in the other, excited a general titter, which respect did not permit to rise to a laugh; while annoyed and irritated by the sarcasm, he vociferated „Come here, my dear, whatever my price may be, let me know yours, and if your face is as pretty as your foot— —" and he reeled forward to seize her hand, and mutter some insolent gallantry, when O'Brien

threw himself between the masks and the Cherokees. Indignant at the unmanly spirit, which forgot alike the courtesy of gentlemen and the respect of men, he said, „These ladies are under my protection; pray make way for them:“ and backing in before the masks, with shoulders and elbows that were not to be resisted, he made a passage, through which the ladies glided unmolested, while the Cherokees raised their accustomed war-whoop, and O'Mealy sang,

A lovely lass to a friar came,
All on a morning early.

Lord Kilcolman at this moment endeavouring to spy under the pilgrim's cowl (which O'Brien had drawn half over his face, on first perceiving the party at the head of the stairs), exclaimed, „I'll be d—d if that isn't Lady Knocklofty's pet rebel, Captain Right.“

O'Brien had just caught the conclusion of this allusion to himself; and irritated at the wanton insolence fo these autocrats of Irish fashion, he was half inclined to take as a personal insult what was probably meant only as a general annoyance, or considered as good fun; and to throw himself again in the way of the assailants,—when a gentle and plaintive „*Ohimè*,“ from one of the pilgrims, who was suffering much from the pressure of the crowd, induced him to struggle with his own petulance. Abandoning his intention, therefore,

he turned back to the helpless and imprudent females, who had ventured so unprotected into a scene, where protection, he now perceived, was so necessary.

Struck, as he was, with the prompt humour of her, whose Latin, Italian, and English were almost equally well pronounced, O'Mealy's suggestion, which he had overheard, recurred to him. It accounted for her singular gift of tongues, for the Italian costume, and for the hardihood with which she and her companion had ventured alone into an assembly, in which the rank of the host did not always secure the good breeding of the guests; and where the license of a masquerade permitted the expression of many an irascible feeling, which the forms of society keep in check.

O'Brien, therefore, offered an arm to either lady, which both silently accepted; and he enabled them to pierce the motley crowd of characters, which, with a terrible rush, were precipitating themselves into the ball-room, through a beautiful arch, hung with coloured lamps and flowery garlands. Immediately to the left of the entrance, he perceived a vacant sofa, and having conducted his unknown *protégées* to this desirable retreat, he was retiring with a pilgrim's salutation and saintly *benedicite* (the flutter of a vague hope at his heart, and the signs of a „*masque en rose*, a wreath, a ring, a flower," full in his imagi-

nation), when the speaking mask solicited his attention by a timidly uttered, „*Scuse, Signor Pellegrino—ma—di grazia.*“

He instantly returned; the stranger paused. O'Brien begged to know if he could be of any further use; but the penitent drooped her head, and played with her rosary, with a graceful awkwardness, that intimated one who had a request to make, but not the courage to prefer it. O'Brien, doubtful whether this was nature or art, and impatient to be off, again asked if he could seek any person, any friend.

Ohimè! Signor Paladino gagliardo,“ replied the penitent. „I have no friend here, and therefore——“ she paused again.

O'Brien thought that there was something ironical in the tone, in which the flattering epithet of Ariosto was applied to him; and fearful of getting entangled with this clever and singular mask, who was „topping her part“ to the uttermost, he coldly expressed his regrets that he could be of no further use; and he was again retiring, when the mask, in an abrupt and pouting tone, exclaimed as she touched his arm, „*Ah! il est toujours plus facile de secourir son prochain, que de le supporter.*“

„I assure you,“ said O'Brien, amused by the *naïveté* of the reproach, and by its *tournure*, „I am quite disposed to do either, in the present instance; and if you will honour me with your commands, I will fly to execute them.“

„Fly!“ said the mask, „suppose you *stay*, to execute them.“

„I should be too happy, fair saint,“ said O'Brien impatiently; „but I have engagements which will prevent my having that pleasure. However, if you have got separated from your party, and will permit me to ——“

„No,“ interrupted the mask, with a sigh. „I belong to no party; not even to that of the United Irishmen.“

O'Brien started; was this coincidence, or „a palpable hit?“ Was he guessed at, or known, and betrayed? He involuntarily seated himself on the arm of the sofa; and leaning on his pilgrim's staff, he gazed with fixed attention on the figure beside him, as if he would have penetrated the muslin cappa which fell before her face: but though it betrayed the outline of a fine profile, he could not recognise a single feature; and he had the caution to reply with affected carelessness,

„If there be such a party as the United Irishmen, your vocation, fair saint, being not of this world, would, doubtlessly, exempt you, as much as your sex, from being a member of it.“

„Women have been members of societies, quite as secret, and much more discreet.“

„Indeed!“ said O'Brien: „and yet they are accused of not being able to keep a secret.“

„That is a vulgar fallacy. The fidelity of

woman is the most inviolable of all human trusts. Woman can keep every secret, but — her own."

„Trust me then with yours," said O'Brien, insensibly interested and amused; „and if you will not raise the envious cappa, at least tell me the name of her whom it conceals."

„How may I trust you?" asked the mask, with a low earnestness of voice and manner.

„I will swear," said O'Brien, „by any oath."

„Hush!" whispered the mask, „you have sworn one oath too many already to-night."

O'Brien remained silent from consternation. He was then known by the person who addressed him. Was she friend or foe? one who came to warn, or to scan him? If a friend, who could it be? Lady Knocklofty? The idea was too romantic. If a foe, what foe? A spy perhaps of the government — one of those hinted at by Lord Walter. What an agency! It recalled the reports circulated obroad of the sisterhood of the „*Sacré Coeur*," the newly affiliated agents of the Jesuits.

Resolved to give the conversation a light turn, and to cut it short, as soon as he could, he continued:

„Without pretending to understand your allusion, nor to take it either as a provocation or warning, I will take any vow of secrecy you please to dictate; provided it procures my

personal acquaintance with the charming person I have the honour to address."

„You were not always so ready to take vows," said the mask drily.

O'Brien was startled by an observation, which, if not accidental, referred to a particular event in his life. „I never," he said, „was half so tempted."

„You are easily tempted," was the half-laughing, but contemptuously uttered reply.

„Indeed!" said O'Brien, „as, for instance, how, where, or when?"

„Everywhere, anywhere," was the careless reply — " at a review in the Phoenix; in the presence chamber at the castle; in the park of the university; in the council-room of the Tailor's-hall. With two words you may be tempted to any enterprise, however wild; or led into any adventure, however perilous."

„Two words!" reiterated O'Brien, eagerly— „name them."

„Love and liberty," whispered the mask. O'Brien remained silent. It was now evident that he was but too well known to the extraordinary person, who thus so faithfully described him. Puzzled, beyond all power of even guessing at the Sphinx which bewildered him (whom, for a moment, he took for Lady Knocklofty, and then again suspected to be Lady Honoria); provoked, but still pleased, he scanned his companion with eyes of intense

curiosity, and at last said, „I would give all I possess, to know who you are?“

„Humph! How much may that be?“ asked the pilgrim, significantly.

„Faith,“ said O'Brien, piqued, but laughing, „so little (as you seem to intimate), that I believe it is confined to mere personal property.“

„The sum of which, *par exemple*, is —“

„A heart that never resisted woman, nor flinched from man,“ said O'Brien.

„A most concise inventory,“ interrupted the mask; „and to be taken for its value on the word of the appraiser. But do you count for nothing the principality of Arran, the green knighthood of the Fassagh, and the barony of Ballyslattery? Trust me, there is one here to-night, who would not be pleased to hear you say so.“

With annoyance and amazement now at their utmost, O'Brien replied, „Indeed! and who may that be?“

„Your aunt, Mac Taaf from Bog Moy.“

„My aunt, Mac Taaf!“ exclaimed O'Brien, completely the victim of an intrigue, carried on with such puzzling ingenuity; „that is impossible — I have just had a letter from her.“

„Of what date?“

O'Brien remembered that it was dated a month back. The mask continued.

„Your aunt was at your rooms this even-

ing, and found you absent. So she has come here to give you rendezvous."

„So," said O'Brien, with a laugh expressive of extreme provocation; yet struck by the coincidence between this intimation, and the note and bank bill he had received in the evening.

„Business," said the mask, „with Lord Knocklofty's agent brought her to town; and as an electioneering bribe, she has received a ticket for the ball, at which she has just arrived, in the well supported character of *Gran-uaile*. Shall we go in search of her?"

„Not for the world," cried O'Brien, with vehemence.

„What an ungracious nephew," said the mask, laughing.

O'Brien remained silent. He wished to go, but could not. An insatiable curiosity to know who his accomplished tormentor could be — a vague suspicion, scarcely amounting to a hope, that one so well, so flatteringly acquainted with him, and with all that concerned him, was, indeed, Lady Knocklofty, was still crossed by the improbability of the fact, and by a display of accomplishments, which, he believed, were not within the possession of his noble protectress. The accent, too, was either really or affectedly foreign; though the English was spoken with infinite fluency, and with a slight inflexion of the Connaught *patois*, so soft and singular in its rhythm. Could it be one of his aunts? The idea was too absurd.

While thus he mused, group after group passed; and some addressed the mask, who replied with more wit than mercy, while the other pilgrim remained mute. Lord Walter, in earnest conversation with a beautiful woman, in the character of Night, smiled and nodded to O'Brien, as much as to say, „I see you are engaged, as well as myself."

„There goes one," said the mask, who, to guess by his words and looks, is *taillé à l'antique;* devoted as an Aristides to his country, as a Pylades to his friend, and as a Leander to his mistress; but all will not do. *On ne joue pas aux échecs avec un bon coeur.*"

„You know Lord Walter, then?"

„About as loug as you do: which, it seems, is long enough for a friendship *à l' Allemande.* Still there is something honest in these uncalculated friendships. The world's friendships are so *hérissées de si, et de mais, et de sous-entendus.*"

At this moment, Lady Honoria, in the character of Psyche, winged and winning, passed on, followed by a crowd: she looked full at O'Brien, but either did not recognise, or refused to acknowledge him.

„Psyche seems *désorientée* to-night," said the mask. „That fatal lamp! the moment you throw a light upon love it vanishes. The allegory is obvious."

„That is according to the nature of the love," said O'Brien.

„There is but one love," replied the mask, „though there are many counterfeits."

„The ancients had several."

„And so too has Lady Honoria," said the mask, laughing.

„With such wit and such beauty, how could she fail?" said O'Brien.

„For her beauty, *passe;* and pass it will of itself before long: and for her wit, it is *l'esprit d'antichambre, — très-gai, et un peu polisson.* But people of the world are not nice. *Tromper leur ennui en le divertissant* is their aim and object; and whoever makes them laugh by a sally, gets credit due only to a discovery. There is nothing original, nothing that comes of strong feeling and strong thinking, in the wit of Lady Honoria; *c'est une flamme sans feu.*"

Exclusively preoccupied by his mysterious and brilliant companion, whose manner had so completely changed since he had first addressed her, O'Brien had now almost forgotten the object which had brought him to a scene so ill-assorted with his position; and he was wholly given up to the spell that enthralled him, and the conjectures it gave rise to. Once before, he had been thus attacked, and thus had succumbed. The adventure, by interfering with a *rendezvous*, had saved him from a crime, and eventually from the summary penalty of such crimes, in Italy — assassination; but what was this to lead to? it was

followed up with too much pertinacity, not to have some object. While thus deeply musing, his eyes accidentally bent down, and, for the first time, met those of the penitent. She was earnestly gazing on his thoughtful and almost wrapped countenance, of which the depth of expression was increased by his additional colouring, and the dress he had assumed. He thought that he recalled, in the fixed and intense expression of those eyes, the same glance which had confused him at the review in the Phoenix Park, and he ventured to observe —"

„I have surely met those eyes before?"

„Yes;" said the penitent, casting them down, with a sigh; „and yet they are not the eyes you came to meet."

„If I were sure of that," said O'Brien, passionately and emphatically — „'Tis the doubt, the hope, the fear connected with that uncertainty, that disheartens and stultifies me. If I dared ask — "

„Fairy favours," said the penitent, „should be accepted without inquiry. Ask no questions, obey and be patient."

„For my patience I cannot answer, though I am disposed to an obedience the most implicit, the most devoted; but obedience implies a reciprocal tie, and I would at least know to whom I am to swear allegiance."

„To the Queen of the Fairies;" was the reply.

„I guessed as much," said O'Brien, full of

the signature of the *invito;* „and I here solemnly offer myself her liege man, in life and limb; and in all earthly worship of faith and truth, so help me Heaven and Allhallows!"

„Vows are but breath;" said the penitent, in a low and agitated voice; „have you no better pledge?"

„What other do you demand?" whispered O'Brien.

„The ring that was given you in St Patrick's Hall."

„If I had it," said O'Brien, much agitated, „I would not part with it for a thousand worlds; but it was taken from me while I slept, and I suspect — I hope by the beautiful donor herself: perhaps, in repentance either of her condescension of her confidence."

„What is that ring you wear?" asked the mask, fixing her eye upon the ungloved hand that grasped the pilgrim's staff.

„That ring — it is a bauble, of little value—"

„But of most melancholy import," said the mask, looking more closely at it. „If it is valueless and sad, why do you wear it."

„It would be a history to relate," said O'Brien impatiently; „and this is not a moment to enter upon any tale, save one."

„Let that be short, then," replied the penitent, quickly, and in a low voice; „for we are watched, and shall soon be interrupted. Leave out the tag and the moral, and come at once to the theme."

„Gratitude," said O'Brien, hesitating and sighing deeply.

„Gratitude! — a cold theme, and a fabulous, at least a doubtful one."

„Fabulous?"

„Yes; little minds never feel, though they profess it; and great minds blush to own, though they should feel it. 'Tis a humiliating sentiment at the best. *Il y a peu de bienfaiteurs qui ne disent comme Satan, si cadens adoraveris me.* Have you, then, no fitter tale for a lady's ear, good Signor Pellegrino?"

„None so worthy for such a lady's ear — none that I dare venture upon now; and yet one there is, the truest and least feigned the heart of man ever dictated."

„By its prologue, I guess 'tis an old tale with a new title-page; like the sonnets got up by the pauper poets of Italian towns; who greet every stranger with the same compliment, and change nothing in their compositions, but the name and the date."

„Hear, at least, before you judge," said O'Brien, petulantly, and mortified by the flippant observation.

„I hear! *guardi il cielo!*" said the mask, laughing contemptuously; „no, Signor Pellegrino, such *rifacciamenti* are not for ears like mine; keep it for hers, whose interest it is to believe."

„For *hers?* If you be not 'the inexpressive she,' then is there no truth in sympathy."

„Vanity, like hope," said the mask, with an emphatic movement of the head, „*dà facile credenza a quel che vuole;* and sympathy thus applied, is but another name for vanity. I, however, am not the Armida of the night."

„Nor I the Rinaldo," said O'Brien. „I am not again to be misled; nor am I like other fairy victims, to be for ever flattered and tantalized, scorned and protected. Still, I would give expression to feelings as far, at least, as words can express them, and I beseech you — "

„Hush!" said the mask; „*je ne veux pas vous escamoter votre secret.* Here comes one who may have claims upon it; I have none."

At that moment, a general movement in the company, a rush from all the other apartments, the performance of the royal anthem of God save the King, and the appearance of the officers of the vice-regal household, announced the arrival of the Lord-Lieutenant. He entered the room, leading in the Lady Knocklofty, and was followed by the Duchess, attended by the Earl, who, as well as his Grace, was in the full costume of the order of St Patrick. Like the rest of his caste, his lordship affected all the forms of nationality; and never failed to parade the Irish order, to put a shamrock in his hat on Patrick's day, and to drown it in his Patrick's pot at night, with due maintenance of a custom „more honoured in its breach than the observance." He, indeed, boasted,

on all occasions, of being a good Irishman; and, as far as ostentation and intemperance went, he had, according to the acceptation of the times, a claim to being a genuine one.

All who were seatcd, now arose; all who stood in groups or crowds, made way for the vice-regal procession; and the brilliant party, as they passed up the room, were saluted and hailed with an homage, to which the genial spirit of the moment contributed, at least as much as the political unanimity of the company. O'Brien alone remained motionless and transfixed, till Lady Knocklofty had so closely approached him that her drapery touched him in her passage. Her eyes met his, but with a glance of such contemptuous indignation (their only recognition), as at once confounded him, beyond all power of joining in the general act of courtesy, which the gracious smile and ready bow of the Duke exacted from all. The court master of the ceremonies now made the necessary arrangements for the opening the lists; and the country dances began, with the exhilarating air of Patrick's Day. The ball was opened by two long sets; the one led off by the Lord-lieutenant and his noble hostess, — the other by the Duchess and Lord Knocklofty. Groups, the most grotesque, followed: monks figured in with oyster-wenches, the devil seesawed with St Patrick, and set to the Lord Chancellor; a jack-boot turned a windmill; and a village

apothecary went three hands round with Death and the Lady; while hands across, right and left, change sides, and turn your partner, were executed with a rapidity, which would have pozed the prosing performers of modern quadrilles, and would have put out of breath and patience, the sauntering figurantes of „*chaîne de dame*," and „*demie-queue de chat.*"

In the midst of this general scene of gaiety and amusing variety, O'Brien, pre-occupied and confused, saw only the terrible glance of Lady Knocklofty. More than ever perplexed and annoyed, he, for the first time, doubted that the invitation had come from her; suspected that he was but the victim of a mystification, which, whatever was its object, had been but too successfully played off against him. Anxious to escape, and yet unwilling to leave without further explanation, his extraordinary companion, whose subtlety and adroitness had given him an almost painful impression of her character and agency, he had unconsciously reseated himself on the arm of the sofa by her side, with a countenance expressive of his agitation and his feelings.

The mask, meanwhile, was evidently amusing herself with the gay groups which flitted before her; beating time with her foot to the music, and humming a very elaborate base to the melody of Patrick's Day, with a science which showed her a perfect mistress of counterpoint.

„*Bravo!*" said her silent companion, for the first time giving signs of life, „*non va male.*"

„*Così, così,*" replied her friend; „Irish music, like all simple melody (the effusion of feeling and of ignorance), is too irregular to admit of scientific harmony."

„*Musica barbara,*" said the virtuosa.

„Yet Geminiani concerted some airs of Carolan; you have heard me play one," replied the other.

„*Perrucca,*" exclaimed the fastidious *cognoscente*, in the harshest guttural tone of the true Italian organ.

„*Scuse,*" replied her companion, „it was any thing but that. A rich melody running through a dry and learned harmony, like a fresh spring flowing into the briny deep, will preserve its sweetness still; and there is nothing of what you call *perrucca*, except where science exclusively holds the place of melody. But musical taste is a mere affair of organs and associations; to either of which there is no prescribing. Every age has its music. That which charms the ear to-day, displeases it to-morrow. *Figuratevi, cara*, the votarists of Piccini, listening to the *madriali*, which were the rage in the seventeenth century: or the devotees of our Paesiello, lending their ears to the cramped harshness of Leo and Durante."

„*Il divino Paesiello! L'insigne maestro!*" exclaimed the Signora, with enthusiasm, as

she sounded the depths of a massive snuff-box, drawn from the pilgrim's scrip, with fingers which were certainly not those of Aurora.

„*Divino*, yes, for us; but quære as to our successors. Even the strains of Paesiello may yet be put out of fashion by the more brilliant and exciting creations of some future genius; and the *Il mio ben* of the sweet Cimarosa may be pronounced by future *virtuosi*, — an *aria di sorbetto.*"

„*Non credo niente,*" said the *cognoscente*, „*è cosa impossibile.*"

„Every thing is possible," was the reply.

„*A lei, sì,*" rejoined the Italian, significantly; while in raising her *cappa* to take her snuff, she exhibited one of those marked, withered, and furrowed visages, which are only to be found in the regions where the youth of woman is loveliest.

„*Che ne pensate?*" said the original mask, turning to O'Brien, who had almost involuntarily listened to these musical observations, by which he became insensibly as much amused as he was amazed; while his suspicions again reverted to O'Mealy's hint of the *prima donna* of the opera. „I know," she continued, „you are an amateur. At least, I remember once seeing you ecstatized at the litany of the Virgin, sung on a particular festival in the Chiesa di Loretto at Rome."

„Good heavens," cried O'Brien, „is that possible?"

„Yes, you stood near the *altare maggiore*, under Arpino's great picture, when one of the congregation of the *Corpo Sacro*, a sister of the convent of the *Bambin Gesù*, sung the solo."

„Then," said O'Brien, „it was in Italy you have known me."

„In Italy, in France, in Ireland, in the isles of Arran, in Ischia, in the Campagna, and in Connemara, any where, every where," was the careless and incoherent reply.

„*Oh! pour le coup*," said O'Brien, now more than ever perplexed by fresh conjectures and surmises, connected with passed adventures in Italy; „this is carrying the imbroglio of masquerading to the very head and front of its offence. That you know me but too well, is beyond all doubt. Of this you have given me a somewhat too painful assurance. For to be frank with you, you have embittered moments destined to far other sensations than those you have aroused; and have turned an expected pleasure into a possitive annoyance."

„*Ohimè!*" said the pilgrim, putting her fingers to her eyes, like a pettish child, „you consider me then a *seccatore*, what you call in English a bore?"

„No," said O'Brien, half laughing in spite of himself, „not that exactly; that were an annoyance easily gotten rid of. You are the reverse of a bore. If you prosed, I should fly; but like the *lucciole* of your Italian woods, you attract attentiou only to evade it. You wind

me up to painful excitement, only to let me down to mortifying depression."

„I have but followed the course of your own feelings. I came not here to hurt, but to save you," said the mask, in a deep and much affected voice.

„Indeed," said O'Brien, „I thank you at least for the intention. May I beg to know from what danger?"

„From the commission of a perilous fault, and of a deadly sin."

„And they are — "

„Unavailing conspiracy and criminal love."

„Good God!" exclaimed O'Brien; then suddenly recollecting himself, he added, „here at least your wit fails in its divination. I presume you have taken me for another?"

„No," said the mask, with emphatic seriousness, „I have known you too long and too well. Your story was the dream of my earliest youth; your fate the subject of my constant occupation."

„Indeed!" said O'Brien, affected beyond all power of concealing his emotion. „If you are really serious, — if this is not mere *jeu d'esprit*, — if we have met before, — if you are one, who, ...; but I must not again commit myself, till you give me more positive proof of your identity. If you indeed know me, you must know me for one at this moment, out of sorts with fortune."

„I know you," said the mask, „for what

you are, and for what you know not yourself to be, — one of high aspirations, but mistaken means. You are, perhaps, that foolish Roman boy who put his hand into the furnace, and only burned his fingers for his pains. Or, if not he, you are Cola di Rianza, or the simple patriot Capponi of Florence, who lost his life, and saved not his country a bit the more; or you are the gallant Fiesco, who spoiled the cause he adopted by an ill-timed explosion; or you may be Meo Patacca, or any other *Capo popolo* — a people's wonder and a party's dupe: one of those whom government permit to go certain lengths, that they may afterwards convert them into agents, or immolate them as victims. For such spirits have been so impersonated, as often to mar as to make the reformation they seek to effect."

This sudden change of tone, from the deepest feeling to the coldest irony, wound up the annoyance of O'Brien to its acme; and he answered with all the coolness he could command, „So much for what I am, — a subject of which, whether you have judged it right or wrong, I have become a little weary: and now, Madam, for yourself."

„Oh! I? do you not then guess at me? I am Nuccia, the *trasteverina*, who prevented Meo Patacca from going to beat the infidels out of Vienna, or from some other enterprize no less safe and wise. Do you, then, forget

the carnival ball at the Borghese palace, the vows you breathed, and I believed?

Dimmi che l 'ho fall' io. Ma troppo errato,
Perchè amare è grande colpa, a un cor ingrato."

This citation, given in the *linguaggio Romanesco*, from the popular poem of Meo Patacca, confirmed O'Brien in his conjecture, that the Mask of Knocklofty House, and the „*bella Nuccia*" of the Borghese palace were one; but who this gifted and tantalizing person could be, was still the enigma. The adventure of that carnival evening had left a deeper impression on his mind, than carnival adventurers are wont to make. He had gone under the influence of the spell of pleasure, which at that season, in Italy, so often tempts the young and the unwary into folly and danger; he had consented to a rendezvous with one more experienced in such adventures than himself; he had assumed the character of Meo Patacca, by an understanding with the party, who was to have appeared as Nuccia: but another Nuccia had crossed their intentions; and with a wit and spirit, a grace and intelligence, and above every thing, with an interest and a knowledge of all that concerned him, had so worked on his volition, as to have led him from the original purpose of the night; and by thus rescuing him from a folly, had eventually protected him from a crime. This, his one sole adventure in the pleasurable but perilous scenes of Italian gallantry, had frequently visited

his imagination, to cheer and warm it; and the remembrance had often recurred with a flush of pleasurable sensation, that came like sun-shine, and left the impression of its light and warmth behind it.

„If," he said, after a long pause, „you are indeed the Nuccia of a certain eventful evening, passed in the Palazzo Borghese, you will tell me where we first met?"

„In the ninth room of the *suite à pian-terreno*. You were standing with your eyes fixed on the picture of Love and Psyche, of Dossa da Ferrara, when I drew your attention to the '*amore divino e profano*' of Titian."

„That is enough," said O'Brien.

„The evening was warm, the moon was bright you followed me to the garden, whose fountain refreshed the air, and spread around a delicious coolness. My *donna d'accompagno*

Suzia se chiama, e non vo mai senza,

was no restraint upon vows as ardent as carnival passion ever inspired —

Io so che solo idolo tuo me chiami
Per farmi scherno dagli inganni tuoi.

„No, by heavens," said O'Brien, „I felt then all I professed; but who can for ever worship a phantom, nameless and unknown, or love with human feelings the vision of a dream? You told me then, as now, you came to save me."

„And did I not? She whom you went to

meet, the faithful, 'inexpressive she,' of that night, consoled herself with another Patacca, and, detected by her husband, saw her lover fall by his hand."

O'Brien shuddered.

„Had you been but four days in Rome, instead of two, you would have better known the Duchess's character."

„I almost fear to ask further," said O'Brien.

„Her husband died in the dungeons of St Angelo; — for her lover was a Doria."

„And the duchess?" said O'Brien.

„You will be shocked to hear."

„Pray go on."

„Married her coachman," said the mask drily.

The blood which rushed from the heart of O'Brien crimsoned his face.

„Oh! these duchesses," cried the mask, with a gurgling laugh, which fell upon the ear like trickling water — „these idol mios, with souls as warm as their suns, these bel tirannos, who alone know how to love, and lead the youth of colder climes a dance from Florence to Rome, on an absence without leave; getting them cited before courts-martial, and sent to lay siege, not to the hearts of duchesses, but to the heights of Oczakow. *O Dio buono*, how often does man mistake vanity for his susceptibility, and the gallantry of a woman of gallantry, for any thing but what it is!"

„If you mean to say, that man is every where

the dupe of woman," said O'Brien, in a tone of evident depression and pique, „*vous prêchez un converti;* I am not the one, heaven knows, to dispute the axiom, — as you, I suspect, are the person to establish the fact; that is, if you are not some gay creature of the element, who laughs at all human ties."

„This is not the language you held in the garden of the Borghese," said the mask reproachfully.

„No; but then you were all woman, soft, gracious, fanciful, and — "

„Credulous," interrupted the mask.

„Not so credulous; since, either in doubt or in timidity, you failed in your appointment in the Santa Maria Maggiore on the following day."

„I failed neither in doubt, nor in timidity, but in obedience."

„Obedience! to whom could such a soul as yours submit?"

„To my master and to yours."

„Mine! that is pleasant. I acknowledge no master."

„Yes, yours, *il est, le fut, et le doit être.*"

„Love of course?"

„No, a more potent power (though, like love, blind) necessity, the law of gods and men."

„A bold doctrine," said O'Brien, „if meant philosophically; or do you mean it literally, that you are married."

„Wedded," she replied, with great energy, and raising her clasped hands with a graceful movement. „Wedded by vows, which, if vows are to be regarded, no human power can break; and this, I swear by the altar on which those vows were pledged."

„You have a doubt then on the subject?" said O'Brien significantly, and fascinated beyond all power to move his eyes from those which now met and replied to his.

„I have a doubt upon all things, and all subjects. I am a secret member of that much persecuted sect, whose creed is more hated than catholicism in Ireland, heresy in Rome, or truth everywhere."

„And its name?"

„The I-dont-knows — for, observe, that to acknowledge ignorance has ever been deemed a crime. Believe what is absurd, — impossible; but believe, and assert, and dogmatize (*n'importe quoi*), and you will have partisans and protectors everywhere."

„What an extraordinary creature!" said O'Brien. „But when is this carnival imbroglio, began nearly two years back, to come to its *éclaircissement?*"

„To-night, I fear," said the mask, sighing.

„When and where?" cried O'Brien, breathless, from emotion.

„This will inform you," replied the mask, drawing a sealed paper from her bosom.

O'Brien snatched it eagerly, and was about to break the seal.

„Not here, not now," interrupted the mask, putting her hand eagerly upon his, and as suddenly retiring it. „See, who approaches?"

O'Brien looked up. The Duke and Lady Knocklofty, who had danced down the interminable couples of the long set, were now approaching the sofa, to which O'Brien had been chained since his entrance. Every one rose as they advanced, and the masks rose also; and made way for them, where they had been seated. Lady Knocklofty and the duke took their places without ceremony: and O'Brien, in great confusion, not knowing whether to seek the notice of Lady Knocklofty, or to avoid it, — to move away, or to remain, — stood for a moment beside the sofa, where the masks had left him.

His characteristic and distinguished person, set off by a dress calculated to give it every advantage, probably, struck the duke; for he looked at him earnestly, and then whispered Lady Knocklofty. She replied almost aloud,

„I don't know at all. We are never very fastidious upon these occasions, where number, and not selection, is the object; and persons are sometimes invited under false impressions, who perhaps, ought not to be here. Shall we join the duchess? I see her in the next room." Taking the duke's arm, she arose,

and moved through the opening crowd into an adjoining apartment.

With the deepest mortification, with pride wounded, with every sense of delicacy, of taste, of feeling, violated, O'Brien heard himself marked out as an unbidden and an unwelcome guest, as a person asked under false impressions; and he stood writhing under the agony of his humiliating obtrusion. What did all this mean? Whence this change in Lady Knock-lofty's conduct, looks, and manner? was it the result of his expulsion? was it the terrible consequence of his blasted reputation? To her, at least (his hitherto supposed „fancy's queen"), he stood guiltless. Was this, the explication of her „*qui me cherche me trouve?*" was this the protection she had promised him in all exigencies? He trembled with stifled vexation and annoyance. Now too, for the first time, he felt the isolation of his position in this gay, fantastic multitude. The penitent mask had so surrounded him with her spells, that he had hitherto seen nothing beyond the range of her magic circle. Now the charm was broken, and he was alone, in the most fearful sense of the word, — alone in a crowd. His first impulse was again to seek the sybil, whose mysterious leaf still trembled in his hand; the next was, to consult its oracular contents. He looked on the seal as he was about to break it: its motto struck him. It was his

own „*Vigueur de dessus.*" He hurried with the paper to an empty room on his left, and read, as follows: —

„If the most unfortunate of parents has yet a place in the heart of a wayward child, Murrogh O'Brien will hasten to the burying ground of the Hospital-fields, near the ruins of O'Brien House; where, by a newmade grave, at the foot of the square tower, he will meet the houseless mendicant, his charity this night sought to relieve by the donation of the inclosed.

„ARRANMORE."

The inclosed was the gold coin, bestowed on the beggar in the court of the Thailor's Hall; and that beggar was — a deadly sickness came over O'Brien, at the bare suspicion — that beggar was his father! The revulsion of thought and feeling this horrible fact occasioned, was accompanied by an intolerable sensation of pain in his head and eyes, with a dizziness that obliged him for a minute to support himself on the chimney, near which he stood; and again, as his dazzled sight reverted to the terrible letter, written in his father's well known hand, the big drops gathered on his forehead, and fell upon the paper. While he still read, the *pendule* on the marble chimney piece struck twelve. There was not a moment to lose, not one to seek for the strange mysterious bearer of his letter; if indeed she might yet be found. But

of her, not a second thought occurred. Pity, the most overwhelming of human sentiments, while it endures, pity for a father, who, if not more than miserable was scarcely less than mad, took possession of every thought; not unmixed with a remorse, which if exaggerated, was not wholly unfounded.

Hurrying from the Circe bowers (so opposed to the scene he was about to seek), with a precipitancy wild as his thoughts, he sprang into a hackney coach, and drove to the masquerade shop, where he took off his dress. Resuming his hat and coat, and discharging the carriage, he proceeded on foot to the Hospital fields.

CHAPTER IV.

THE HOSPITAL FIELDS.

What is he, whose grief
Bears such an emphasis? Whose phrase of sorrow
Conjures the wandering stars?

It was already „the dead watch and middle of the night," when O'Brien, having passed through the streets and lanes on the south side of the Liffey, found himself in one of the most dreary and ruinous suburbs of the Irish capital. Swamps and wilds to the left were edged with dilapidated buildings, the more melancholy in their aspect, when a glimmer of light, issuing from a broken pane, gave indication that there some victim of wretchedness had retired to die. To the right appeared the then neglected banks of the river, with the high walls of the various hospitals (the refuge for every infirmity, from the mental aberration, for which Swift had here provided, in a dreadfully prophetic spirit, to the most loathsome of bodily inflictions). One dark mass, frowning and terrible above all, for a moment fixed his eye, and arrested his steps, — the state prison of Kilmainham: and never under

the iron sceptre of the direst despotism, had power, trembling in its strongest holds, erected a more fearful image of coercion, to supply the influence of a wholesome and pacifying legislation. O'Brien shuddered, and passed on. A narrow, rutty lane to the right, led to the open cemetery of the Hospital-fields. A hurry of thought, a flutter of feeling, a feverish velocity in all the vital and moral functions of his being, left him incapable of thought or reflection, of inference or conjecture. In the course of his gloomy and devious route, all that had occurred in this most eventful day, his trial, expulsion, initiation at the club of United Irishmen, the scenes at Knocklofty House, the sybil mask, came and went, like confused and fearful phantoms, over the surface of his imagination. But all these spectral reminiscences vanished as he entered the churchyard, the sad receptacle of posthumous wretchedness, where the earth is permitted gratuitously to receive those in death, whom it could not support in life. He plunged on through its long, rank grass, and plashy soil, over those garlanded monuments and intermingled tombs of departed indigence, which the pauper pride of surviving misery had decorated with paper crosses, and faded flowers. One „bright particular star" shone steadily above the ruinous tower described by Lord Arranmore, and one dark unfilled grave yawned be-

neath it. This, then, was the appointed rendezvous.

O'Brien was already near it, and he paused for breath and force to proceed. Perceiving a human figure under the broken archway of the tower, he advanced a few steps; when a sudden thought of danger flashed on him like lightning. He was unarmed, and utterly defenceless; but he called in a firm tone, „Who stands there?"

„Murrogh," replied a broken, plaintive, and well known voice.

„My father!" he exclaimed; and the next moment he would have been in his father's arms, but that Lord Arranmore held him off with trembling hands, and looked on him fixedly, fondly, yet with a fearful and haggard wildness.

„Do you not recognize me, my dear father?" said O'Brien, almost suffocated with emotion: „Do you, not know me?"

„Know you!" said Lord Arranmore, still holding him off, „*heu mihi*, *Jesu!* know you!"

„Am I not your son, your own and only son?" exclaimed O'Brien, inarticulate from the agony of his feelings, as he grasped his father's hands, and pressed them to his eyes and forehead. Lord Arranmore's countenance, faint as was the light by which it was seen, was so changed, so haggard, and so sad, as to render him scarcely recognizable; and even the garments he wore

might have passed on a heated imagination for the shreds and patches of mendicity. O'-Brien could not proceed. His hot tears fell fast on his father's hands. After a pause, in which the old man seemed to gather force of mind and clearness of apprehension, he at length spoke.

„Murrogh, shed no tears for me, my son; but weep for yourself. My course is run, my sacrifice is accomplished, is accepted, through the merits of Him, who has suffered for the sins of all; and who has not rejected the offering of a broken and contrite heart." He paused and threw up his eyes with an awful expression, as one occupied in mental prayer, and then continued: — „The cup of bitterness has passed from me; but it rests in your hands. You have yet to drain it to the dregs; for the unredeemed curse of the church you have abandoned, and would persecute, — the curse, drawn down on your race, by him who betrayed his king, and slew the Lord's anointed, is still upon your young head, like the cloud that muffles the thunderbolt."

„My dearest father!" said O'Brien, terrified at this denunciation, and at the aberration of mind which evidently produced it, „What is it you mean? curse do you——"

„What do I mean!" reiterated Lord Arranmore, releasing his hands from the grasp of his son. „Rebel! Atheist! false to your king•

and God, worthy descendant of O'Brien the 'Incendiary,'—I disown you — I cast you off. You have blasted my hopes, and broken my heart; you have linked yourself with the enemies of me and mine, and are unworthy of the name you bear, and the blood that flows in your veins."

O'Brien had long observed a change in the manners as well as person of his father; whose mode of speaking, whose very tone and accent were within the last few months much altered. He had, however, never been so much struck with the total transmutation of his parent's personal appearance, as now: and he could only answer to this wild and incoherent accusation, in a confusion of feeling, that rendered him almost as unconnected as the unfortunate parent he addressed.

„My dear, dear father," he said, „by whatever impressions or prejudices you are now judging me, I beseech you reserve them for another time. Consider me now, as I am, the most devoted, the most attached of sons; ready for any sacrifice, for any effort you dictate; ready to labour, to suffer, to live, to die for you; only be calm, be confident: all may yet be well. Let me, I beseech, lead you from this horrible place; its awful dreariness affects you; the very air is pestilential. We tread on human dust, we breathe an infected atmosphere. Accept of the support which nature has

provided for you; drive me not from you, let me lead you home."

„Home," said Lord Arranmore, in a deep despairing tone, „I have no home, I am this night homeless, houseless."

„Gracious God!" exclaimed O'Brien, in a voice of agony, expressive of his harrowed feelings, and throwing his arms round his father, while he supported him in their fold, and sobbed upon his bosom.

With a convulsive pressure, that seemed the victory of some natural emotion over a concerted and bidden restraint, and with a vigour more borrowed from a strength of feeling than from physical force, Lord Arranmore drew his son to his heart. „You love your poor old father, then," he said at last in a tone of heart-breaking pathos.

„Love him! Oh God!"

„You will not, then, abandon him?"

„Did I ever? Was it not you, my dearest father, who, wrapped up in mystery, have so long left me a prey to the most melancholy conjectures."

„Oh, Murrogh, Murrogh!" interrupted Lord Arranmore, more collectedly than he had yet spoken, „there is, I fear, between you and me, a gulf, which neither of us can pass in this world; and in the next, my son, I fear we are parted eternally."

„I would not believe it for a thousand

worlds," said O'Brien, now firmly convinced that his father was worked upon by some unknown influence, some mystery, as yet impenetrable. „So far from that, again restored to you, even here, in this desolate and mortal Golgotha, I feel a joy that is inexpressible; differing, as we have ever done, upon particular opinions" (Lord Arranmore sighed almost to a groan), „with views as opposed as our age and breeding — but of this at a more apposite time — still the ties of filial respect and tenderness have never loosed from my heart. No change of place or circumstance, neither distance nor time, has absolved or weakened them. Confide then in your child, your only son; let us leave this dreadful place; and," he added, in a soft soothing voice, and scriptural language, „thy home shall be my home, and thy God my God."

Lord Arranmore started. „Do you say this, Murrogh, from your heart? Will you now, seduced as you have been, bewitched as you are at this moment, will you leave, and for me? There is — there has been a shelter offered to your desolate and houseless father, to save his grey hairs from descending with sorrow to the grave, — to such a grave as this, which else must soon receive him."

O'Brien shuddered, and endeavoured gently to lead him away; but in vain.

„Would you," said Lord Arranmore, „save

from the shame of a pauper's grave the descendant of the princes of Arran, and the representative of those whose ashes sleep beneath the Druid's cromlech and the saint's altars, whose bones moulder in the consecrated earth of Dun Engus? Would you now fly with me, where a refuge, safe and calm, honourable ond holy, is prepared for me, while I yet live; and when the hour comes, now so near, when the last of the chiefs of Arran, worthy of the glorious heritage, shall descend to the tombs of his ancestors, in the isles strewed with their bones, he will go, borne on the necks of his people. The dust, blessed by St Engus, shall still be spread over him; and his body shall sink to the narrow house, amidst the *chree* of his clan; while his soul shall ascend, through faith, to his Redeemer."

„Good God," interrupted O'Brien, worked upon by images, to which his spirits lent themselves but too aptly, „I cannot bear this—hear me, I beseech you."

„No," said Lord Arranmore, with vehemence, „I will hearonly your assent or refusal. For you I will forfeit all — again looking on you, my son, my soul returns to you — again united, we part no more; and if you come not with me, where, for the little time I have yet to breathe and suffer, ere I go where the wicked man ceases from troubling, and the weary may be at rest, I shall remain here, to share your fate and to meet my own."

„Let me but lead you away," said O'Brien, in the fullest excitement of extreme wretchedness, and momentarily more struck by his father's attenuated and changed appearance. „Let me but lead you from the inclemency of this night and the horrors of this place, and I will agree to any proposition that can ease your mind or calm your spirits, and give you confidence in the devotion of your son."

„Then," said Lord Arranmore, after a moment's pause, and an effort to collect himself, while he permitted his son to assist him over the graves and mounds, „know that the ruin of your father's fortunes is imaged in the fall of the last roof he could call his own. All honour, hope, and maintenance are laid in the dust. He has done with the world, but for the tie that keeps him there, through you. Houseless, homeless, pennyless, there is yet a congregation of good and holy men, ready to receive and place him beyond the reach of the prison, that now awaits him: and there are revenues, which, for religion's sake, and inapplicable to all other purposes, will suffice to redeem him from the fangs of his creditors,—from the worldly evils that beset him on every side. While.....but this is not the time or place for further explanation. Murrogh, it is you, that have been opposed to my worldly and eternal safety. I cannot quit the world for ever, where you stand still exposed, the

last branch of the tree of Maghadoire, * severed from its ancient stem, and left to the blast and whirlwind, its bloom withered, and its young buds scattered: I ought not to remain in it. Oh! Murrogh, Murrogh, the heart of the father, wilful and sinful, forgets its God, for the sake of the child, which he has given in his goodness or in his wrath. On the road to salvation, I pause; and drawn back to the world you inhabit, my heart still pants for you, to see you, to commune with you, to warn, to bless you, to part from you no more."

He fell, overpowered, into the arms extended to receive him.

„Nor shall we part, my dear father," said O'Brien. „Had we the means of departure, even now I would fly with you, succour, protect you; and having consigned you in safety to those friends who offer you their shelter, return only to this working-day world, to earn the means of an honest and honourable existence, for us both."

„The opportunity of departure," said Lord Arranmore, in a hesitating voice, „is not wanting. I cannot now enter upon a long and sorrowful story. Time presses. For three months, I have been baited, hunted, persecuted. I have also, by God's grace and his

---

* An old oak, under which the chiefs of the O'Brien family were inaugurated.

blessed Mother's, voluntarily endured much. But I am escaping from the toils; and this night, — even here, within a few paces, means of escape are provided."

„Indeed!" said O'Brien, struck by this information, which so ill agreed with his father's destitute condition. But he in vain endeavoured to collect his thoughts: they every moment were becoming less coherent and less within his controul, as a numbing and stupifying pain in his head, increased to agony. „This is strange, is fortunate. Yesterday I learned at your lawyer's, that some relative, some foreign ecclesiastic, had come forward to arrange with your creditors; and this night I found a letter in my room with a bill, a bank bill. You have some powerful agent too; and with such an agent, I do not understand, at least I would willingly believe that a misery so insupportable was — — but my thoughts are so confused, I know not what I say."

He paused: and Lord Arranmore replied quickly; „I have no agent but Shane-na-Brien himself a hunted out-law."

„Gracious heavens! is that possible! and where is he now?"

„Safe now, I trust," said Lord Arranmore; „but my hour is come."

He put up his finger, as one in the act of listening; and O'Brien at that moment heard

a carriage drawing up to the entrance of the cemetery.

„Murrogh," said his father, trembling violently under some agitating contest of feeling, „Murrogh, judge for me; judge for your unfortunate father. Save me in this world and the next. I will not, I cannot again part from you."

„I will attend you, Sir, whatever may be the consequence, whatever the nature of this mystery. My mind is just now terribly confused, I have gone through so much within the last four-and-twenty hours; but I feel that in following your fortunes, and my own sentiments, I am acting well."

He articulated with difficulty, as he endeavoured to collect and arrange his scattered ideas. They had now reached the gate of the burying-ground, the carriage had drawn close to it, and the door was opened by one, who appeared to be the driver, and who alighted for the purpose.

„I will attend you, Sir," said O'Brien, mechanically; seeing that his father still hesitated, and putting his hand to his head, he added, „I will at least convey you safely to your friends."

Lord Arranmore motioned him to enter. He sprang into the carriage; and his father, having given an order, in a low voice, to the driver, followed. The door was shut, the

blinds were drawn up, and the carriage drove off, — at first, slowly, over the rutted road: then stopping for a few moments, it proceeded with a velocity, scarcely noticed by its younger occupant.

With folded arms, and a drooping head, — vanquished by agony of mind and body, by inordinate fatigue and exhaustion of all the faculties, physical and moral, —he lapsed into that disturbed, but absorbing slumber, which vibrates between insensibility and delirium. He had felt that something more than a moral *mal-aise* hung over him. He felt it in the pulsations of his aching head, in flushes of perturbation; and in sinkings of the heart. He had felt this, in fainter symptoms, since the night of the fall of Arranmore House; but he had, as it were, put it off. He had not „leisure to be ill;" and, for an interval, moral energy had kept physical infirmity in abeyance. But on entering the carriage, his oppression had amounted almost to suffocation; and he had been compelled to let down the glass of the window beside him. The fresh air of the country came like balm on his senses: and the regular breathing of his father giving indication that sleep had closed on his sufferings, and forbad further conversation, he permitted the refreshing, but dangerous coolness of the night breeze, gradually to overcome the feverish agitation of his thoughts;

and he sunk into forgetfulness, if not into repose.

Starting from many a broken vision, disjointed and made up of wild and incoherent images, he frequently put forth his hand, to ascertain that his father was still beside him; and this conviction being obtained, he endeavoured to connect his ideas, and to turn his thoughts to all that had recently occurred. But Lord Walter, the extraordinary, the tantalizing mask, the office he had accepted in the Society of the Union, his expulsion, his present strange situation, his father's ruin, the fall of the old house, the unlooked for re-appearance of Shane-na-Brien on the scene of life, and in the particular business of his own especial interests, mingled together, and confused imagination to delirium. Horses were changed, and daylight had broken, and the ancient and venerable town of Athenry was reached; and still, life was to him almost as if it were not.

CHAPTER V.

THE ABBEY OF CONG.

A lowly roof, a shed
With hairy moss and winding ivy spread,
Honest enough to hide an humble hermit's head.
DRYDEN — *Hind and Panther.*

WHEN the learned orientalist and enterprizing traveller, Richard Pocoke, had overrun the east, „to Aleppo gone," and visited Palestine and Syria, and Jerusalem, and Mesopotamia, and Candia, and Cyprus, and Giuret on the Nile, — regions belonging then only to antique fable (for space and time had not, according to the lover's wish, as yet been annihilated, by steam-boats and grasshopper-springs), he completed the measure of his life's vicissitudes by terminating his wanderings in the obscure solitudes of an Irish province; and he reposed from his labours in the purple indolence of the Irish prelacy. In reviewing the different scenes he had visited, and comparing Mount Galvary with the Scottish Dingwall, the Bishop of Elphin was wont to add — „And yet there is a spot in Ireland, that comprizes within its verge more of the loftier features of picturesque beauty, than any one scenic combination I saw in the course of my oriental travels." The spot alluded to was an ac-

cidental elevation, in the neighbourhood of Cong, a decayed village on the borders of Mayo and Galway; and the „scenic combinations" were the ruins of its ancient abbey, that bathes its delicate reflections of gable and tower in the beautiful river, which runs in liquid silver beneath its walls. Its druidical monument, once revered as „the great Caellagh"* of antichristian times, — its antique bridge, — the green rich soil, speckled by clumps of white rock, looking like Turkish tombs, — and the gushing springs bursting forth from their subterraneous caverns (to which they return by other cavities), formed the foreground of the picture; while the blue waters of Loughs Corrib and Mask, with their wooded islands and winding shores, and the stupendous mountains of Connemara, Morisk, and Mayo, broken into tumultuous disorder, and admitting through the intervals of their „cloudcapped" heads, views of the great Atlantic, filled up the distance, and completed a scene, well worthy of the eulogium of the travelled Bishop.

This site had early attracted the attention of both church and state, by its loveliness and fertility. Here the kings of Connaught fixed their residence so early as the sixth century; and here St Fechan, the director of the con-

---

* Caellagh, — a stone, — the *caillou* of the French.

science of Donald, supreme king of Ireland, erected, in the succeeding age, his magnificent monastery for regular canons, under the invocation of the Virgin Mary; which the rich donations of his royal penitent rendered one of the wealthiest and most beautiful of the ecclesiastical establishments in the island of Saints.

The regular canons of Cong, like those of the neighbouring monastery of Headfort, became wealthy by the commerce they carried on between the interior country and the coast; — as they were powerful from the rank of many of their royal members: and their abbots, princes palatine, held their place in those rude parliaments, where all came armed, from the heel to the neck, and prepared for other contests than those „keen encounters of the wits," which bring the members of modern senates into the lists of fierce, but bloodless discussion.

Thus richly endowed and influential, the Abbot of Cong became a proverbial type of all honour, wealth, and prosperity; and „not for the Abbey of Cong," or „not to be made abbot," was an appeal to probity, which testified that the asserter of his own powers of resistance was beyond the reach of all human temptation. * Forms persecuted did not ex-

---

* Saint Colgan, speaking of the Irish saints and monasteries, says, „All that is reported of their numbers, will scarcely in after times be credited;» and though they had much diminished in the time

tinguish the spirit which originated them; and though the Abbey of Cong (a model of the finest ecclesiastical architecture in Ireland), was left to moulder in premature ruin, and the tithes and lands, which supported its altars and its monks, went to support other monks, as useless to the community as those thus summarily dispossessed, — still from century to century the order was kept up, within some nook of its ruined walls, by one or two successive members; the elder of whom continued to be venerated by the catholic peasantry of the surrounding district, as the Abbot of Cong.

As, however, the monastery mouldered into untenantable ruin, beautifying as it fell, the Abbot and his one or two brethren (poor and lowly, patient and suffering as they were), were obliged to yield their ancient tenement to the owl that sheltered beneath its Saxon arches and the bat that flitted through its beautiful cloisters.

But when, thus banished, the Abbot and his solitary brethren betook themselves to a little fabric, raised by the piety of the poor, out of the rubbish of the Abbey ruins, they excited

---

of Henry the Eighth, so that only four hundred regular monasteries were found in Ireland, at the period of the supposed suppression of such establishments, yet there was scarcely a secular benefice, or even the poorest parish, that had not, in its origin, maintained a community of monks or nuns.

no attention, and provoked no persecution; at a time even when the law of the land was most rigorous against regulars of all denominations. By degrees the Abbot's house, as it was called, assumed a better appearance. A chimney to emit smoke, and a glazed window to admit light with other tokens of mundanity, announced a better state of financial affairs, and an increase of oblations and voluntary offerings, — to the diminution of the revenue of the parish priest. Still the protestant rector of Cong (who was building his own comfortable house, by carrying off and appropriating some of the finest druidical monuments, the remains of which are still to be seen near the Abbey) did not think the „church was in danger."

It happened, however, about the same epoch, at which General Count O'Flaherty had redified the Abbey of Moycullen, in a manner the least edifying, by a conjunction of the cells and cloisters of St Bridget, with pavilions worthy of Epicurus, the Abbot's house underwent a transmutation scarcely less striking than that which covered the rude walls of the Santa Casa of Loretto, with gold and gems. The miserable house rose into a commodious and spacious dwelling. Although rapidly, and therefore slightly raised, and destined to be long survived by the ruins out of which it had sprung, it assumed a Gothic form and outline, which gave it an antiquated and massive air;

and its little chapel had borrowed so largely from the cloisters and pointed windows of the abbey, that it looked like a prolongation, or rather well proportioned parcel of the original building. Even the altar-piece, which had been hung upside down by the rustic artificers employed to place it, would have revealed to the amazed eyes of a *cognoscente*, had any such then visited the village of Cong, a *replico* of the beautiful holy family of Annibal Caracci, of the Florence Gallery. This humble attempt to raise the once puissant establishment of regulars was ascribed to some foreign ecclesiastic, who, visiting Cong on a journey into Connemara, had been struck by the beauty of the place, and shocked at the sacrilegious neglect of one of the finest ecclesiastical ruins in Ireland; and the donation he had made to the community, was followed up by others. The plan of the Abbot's new house was attributed to one of the most distinguished members of the Royal Irish Academy, Baron O'Brien, afterwards Lord Arranmore. Notwithstanding the notoriety of these proceedings, and the visible improvement in the condition of the establishment, no show of molestation was offered by the church by law established, until one of its rural Boulters and Stones took exception at the Abbot's availing himself of a neglected salmon weir, which had belonged to his predecessors in the reign of Henry the Seventh'

and which conveyed the fish alive into the cistern of the abbey kitchen from the stream. The whole artillery of the penals was then brought to bear against the community, and the order was once more dispersed, as in the time of Henry the Eighth.

The house and its pretty garden, however, remained; and it was kept in preservation, and inhabited by an old man and his wife, — the reputed proprietor living abroad. After a time, it was again occupied, by two or three respectable, middle aged gentlemen whose quiet, unobtrusive congregation excited neither suspicion nor alarm. They were known as constituting one of those confraternities, then and now so numerous in Ireland, whose members, in disgust with the world, or in love of solitude, live in community for the performance of religious practices.

At first, nameless and unconspicuous, these associates were called, „the religious gentlemen of Cong;" and living in strict retreat, they were known only by the good they did; for they were charitable and alms-giving, and being of all professions, they applied their skill and acquirements to relieve the various ills to which the unaccommodated wretchedness of the Irish peasant stands every where exposed. Their medicine chest supplied the place of those excellent dispensaries, which, of late years, have become so general and so

beneficial in Ireland Their kitchen distributed soups, such as the Abbey refectory, in former times, dispensed to the crowding applicants. The garden teemed with simples, sovereign in every malady; and one of the members, a surgeon, superseded all the bone-setters and wise women in the country. Their paddock, which at first only fed the mule that drew their market-cart, gradually became a field; and the field grew into a farm, which in time became the source of new-light agriculture to the scollogs and middle-men of the neighbourhood: and their chapel, in consequence of the admirable preaching of a young Franciscan, who had left the convent of his order, to unite himself with the confraternity, became so much too small for the congregation, that they were obliged to raise the roof, and add a gallery round the choir.

Their affluence, from whatever sources it sprang, gained them consideration among the „estated gentlemen" of the province; and the *suaviter in modo* of some few of the members, and the *bonhomie* of all, procured them a certain respect and good-will from the inhabitants of the neighbourhood; which was not a little increased by their occasional, though always accidental, hospitality. Though they paid no visits, they were always pleased to receive them; and though they accepted no invitations (never sleeping or eating from under their own

roof), they gave them constantly and kindly to such gentlemen as came from Tuam or Ballinrobe, from their castles in Lough Corrib, or their mansions in the mountains of Galway.

Their fare, though served upon coarse, but snowy linen, and on plain yellow delf, constituted a *menu* that often startled the palates of the Connaught gourmands. *Matelottes d'anguille*, which changed the mud eels of Cong to the savour of those of St Cloud: *truites à la maître-d'hôtel*, which confounded the peculiarities of the red trout of Corrib, and the white of Mask; with *soupes maigres*, which might fatten the ribs of abstinence itself, gave a new species of reputation to the community. The report even went, that their cook was a Frenchman; and that toleration, at first refused to their dogmas, was now implicitly yielded to their dinners. The bluest protestants in Galway, the most kiln-dried high churchman of Mayo, were but little inclined to persecute men „whose port they liked." The creed of these Reverend Amphitryons stuck not in the throats of those who swilled their claret; and the protestant Bishop of the diocese even expressed a wish to examine the tenets and the table of a confraternity, whose pastry almost excused their popery: for they had sent him a Perigord pie, which might have driven him (had the book then been in existence) to parody the remark in the *Almanach des Gourmands*,

and to have said, „*Ainsi cuit, on aurait mangé le Pape.*"

It soon became the fashion of the most orthodox tables to toast the Abbot of Cong; an appellation, however, which, when applied to the superior of the confraternity, he constantly refused; — with the observation, that it would have been well for the christian world, had there never been any more powerful abbots, or more wealthy orders, than himself, and the little community over which he was but as an elder brother: — a community, whose members, like the first congregated ascetics of the church, were neither separated from the world by vows, nor led into it by ambition; but who retired to live in purity, to love God above all things, and their neighbour as themselves.

When he had first mentioned the name of his confraternity, he replied to the inquiries made concerning it, that it was a peculiar *culte* of the catholic church, newly established in Italy, in honour of that sacred heart, which had beaten in human sympathy with human suffering.

Profound as was the retreat of the religious gentlemen of Cong, and inofficious as were their habits, they still appeared to have „views on this side heaven;" or at least ties and interests, which were not all centred in the remote and romantic site to which they had retired. The community, or some one individual among them, had obtained the superintendence

of a large tract of bog and mountain in Jar Connaught, including the ample ruins and fertile valley of Moycullen: which, scarce a day's journey, by land or lake, from their own retreat, was looked to with all the care, and worked with all the skill of a favourite domestic farm. There were also within the last two years certain „*allées et venues*," of the brethren, which passed not without remark; and the little post-house of the village was put into almost daily requisition, for letters of foreign mark; and heavy postage, directed to the reverend gentleman at the head of the society. The arrival also of a very aged, but most singular and distinguished looking ecclesiastic, whose dress and air bespoke his rank, excited considerable sensation in the neighbourhood; from the circumstance of his being accompanied by two females, who were lodged at the old inn at the foot of the bridge, kept from the remotest times by the Betaghs or hereditary innkeepers of Ireland; though now so rarely frequented, as to make the event a marvel.

The ecclesiastic himself was lodged in the best room of the retreat, and served with a respect and reverence by all the brotherhood, in his occasional visits, which the titular archbishop of the province never exacted or received. The females were understood to be foreign nuns; for they were habited like Miss Joyce of Balintogher, and Miss O'Kelly of Ballin-

robe, who, on the dissolution of the French monasteries, had returned to their people, for the purpose of being installed in some of the Galway,or Tuam nunneries. They had remained but two days at Pat Betagh's, and had passed their time in sketching among the ruins and caves of Cong, and in stringing an old Irish harp, which had lain in a corner of Pat Betagh's best parlour for ten years. It had been deposited there as a pledge for whiskey, drank, beyond the means of the Irish muse to pay for: and as Rory Cormack, the blind harper, had been drowned on the very night of the deposit, in Lough Corrib, he had consequently never redeemed it. The religious but musical ladies found no difficulty in purchasing this harp; and when they took their departure with their venerable companion, they embarked on Lough Corrib with the instrument, a portfolio of drawings, and one of the religious gentlemen of the confraternity.

Something more than a year had elapsed, since this notable event, which had supplied the tea table, as by law established, in the parlour of the Rev. Mrs Ginkle (the rector's wife), with exhaustless sources of surmise and suspicion, when another arrival at the porch of the retreat, announced by the braying of every cur in the village, gave renewed vigour to the gossiping curiosity of the neighbourhood. A report was spread that the chaise and four,

whose rattle over the Irish pavement of the main street had no less disturbed the equanimity of the cater-wauling, than it had of the canine population, had contained a maniac and his keeper, and that the former had been instantly consigned with much mystery to the hospital room of the retreat: it was moreover added, that the second personage never left that room, till carried from it in a state as dangerous, as that of the patient he had watched.

The physician from Tuam, who had been called in to assist the medical brother of the congregation, told another story; of which Mrs Ginkle believed as much as it pleased her prejudices to credit. He stated that a young gentleman, travelling into Connaught with his father, had been seized with a delirious fever on the road, in a wretched village between Athenry and Cong; and that, in utter hopelessness of all medical aid, or necessary assistance, the anxious parent had pushed on with his charge, to profit by the skill, benevolence, and known hospitality of the confraternity, in the hope of shelter, and of that aid which had already worked marvels in the country, not always referred to the science of Podalirius and Machaon.

The elder gentleman was Lord Arranmore, and the unfortunate invalid his son, the Honourable Murrogh O'Brien. The malady had raged with a fierceness, which by no means

turned out to be „prophetic of its end." For three weeks, the fever had continued unabated; and the alienation of mind was complete: on the beginning of the fourth week, when some amendment was visible, the unhappy father (fevered and delirious almost as the object of a solicitude, that seemed tinged by the agony of remorse), himself sickened, and was unable to continue his office. Stretched on his mortal couch, his physician discovered that the noble patient was a member of some rigid order of penitents; for he bore upon his person all the testimonials of the extremest austerity, a shirt of hair-cloth, a girdle of rope, a discipline of sharp infliction, and an iron cross, whose impression had sunk into his bosom.

* * * * *

It was towards the close of the glowing evening of one of those warm summer's day's, in Ireland so fine, so few, and far between, that the sun, as it sunk in clouds of gold, lighted every casement in the front of the Retreat of Cong. A long level ray of crimson brilliancy streamed on the half-drawn curtain of the hospital room, which had been thrown back to admit the air, and fell with peculiar effect upon the head of one, who slept upon the raised pillows of the bed. Colourless as Parian marble, with an expression of that pain, which had left its impress on every feature, it was the head of Prometheus, by Salvator Rosa. A painter's

or a sculptor's eye would have dwelt with insatiate delight on a subject which presented to either art so noble a study. No eye save that of a simple sister of charity (one of those beneficient beings, who, in Ireland, as elsewhere, are to be met, wherever suffering humanity may need their assistance), now gazed on it. Dressed in the sombre habit of her vocation, and holding back the curtain of the bed with one hand, her figure and attitude placed in deep shadow, and opposed to the glare of bright light which fell upon the head of the sufferer, completed a picture, belonging to other climes and other combinations than those, under which this singular group now appeared.

A movement, scarcely perceptible, that passed over the face of the sleeping invalid, displaced the principal figure in this living picture. The curtain fell gently from the hand of the *sœur grise*, and she glided with a noiseless step out of the room, as another female entered it. This was a coarse and homely person, of middle age, dressed in the costume of the Galway peasant. The importance of a nurse was marked in her strong Irish features. Her hands were laden with the drink, which she was about to place on a little table in the corner of the room, when a low and mournful sound, that seemed to swell and die upon the air, caught her ear; and suddenly, but softly, dropping on her knees, she crossed herself and

prayed. She then approached the open casement, and, after a moment, again drew in her head, and hurried away, as if urged by curiosity to inquire into the cause of some interesting and striking effect.

Meantime, as the sounds were repeated, they rose in deeper sadness, at measured intervals, and died away in sobs of more audible grief; till, in their nearer approach, they evidently awakened consciousness in the sleepping sufferer. At first, mingling with the gracious dream, which accompanies the first calm sleep of convalescence, they harmonized with its placid and soothing sensations. He thought them the blessed sounds which issued from the lips of ministering angels; but as consciousness grew stronger, and sense and reason, for the first time during a long period, awoke together, the wild and unearthly tones struck strange and unwonted upon his ear; and they caused a powerful effort at inference and combination, to enable him to ascertain the circumstances of his actual position. The effort, however, was too arduous and painful; and scarcely moving his raised head, he turned his eye towards the casement, through which the sounds were admitted, upon the sweet, soft air, that fanned his feverish temples. His feeble gaze grew stronger, as the light faded into a more sober tone; and the scene on which it rested spoke a doctrine to the sick or dying,

beyond all the holy brotherhood of the *Ben Morire* ever impressed by smoke of torch and sound of bell. A brilliant rainbow hung its arch in the heavens, and spanned a scene beneath of as much beauty and sublimity as ever displayed the magnificence of the Creator. Lakes, and hills, and mountains, brightening into gay confusion, or fading into aërial tints, in the remoter distance — the full glory of the setting sun falling upon all — all looked as on the evening of the seventh day, when God, resting from his labour, saw that it was good.

The invalid stretched forth his languid glance on the scene, which the position of his couch enabled him to command; and he looked upon its loveliness, as the long suffering look upon nature in her freshness and beauty, with sensations not dearly purchased by their privations and pain.

But again that mournful cry chilled his susceptible spirits, which responded but faintly and vaguely to impressions so new and unaccustomed. The brightest external objects fail to produce their exhilarating effects, ere returning health strengthens the organs for their reception. As he gazed and listened, he perceived a train of persons moving slowly and processionally round an old stone cross, that stood at some distance, directly opposite the casement of the chamber. The sad cry, which

was again half uttered, was suddenly suspended and broke into a faint murmur, as if by some abrupt but imperative command, that checked the lamentation for the dead, lest it affect the living.

The slowly returning memory of the invalid recalled in this hullaloo the choral burden of the *caoine*, or Irish death cry, as raised in the province of Connaught; and in the movement round the cross he recognized a superstitious ceremony practised every where, in Ireland, in conveying a body to the grave. The sound and sight did no serve to promote that exhilaration, which a slow convalescence was already bringing with it. In the course of a long and vicissitous disease, some suspensions of suffering had been accompanied with lucid intervals, and the clearing of his consciousness of all around him; and he now looked for forms that had then flitted about him, and cheered, or soothed, his frail existence, by care and kindness, or had agitated it by that restless anxiety which, while it more than shares the pain it cannot relieve, too frequently increases it. But the pale and haggard countenance of almost maniacal solicitude of him, who so often had drawn aside his curtain, and looked its anguish upon him, was now no longer near; neither was that stern brow of unsympathizing fortitude there, that was once seen to beetle over his pillow, in all the resignation of aged insensibility; nor yet that phantom of charity,

which flitted before his eyes, and confused his wandering fancy. All were now gone, and were replaced by the appearance of the homely person, who soon returned, as he had departed, muttering, and praying in the low and mimic whine of the *Chree*, which had called her from her hired office, to inquire its subject.

„For whom is that death cry raised?" asked the invalid, almost startled at the unwonted coherence of his own ideas, and the perfect utterance of his own voice.

„Och, musha!" said the woman (a stranger but recently brought in, to relieve the attendant brother of the hospital, which, till the present occasion, had

Ne'er by woman's foot been trod).

„Och, musha! sure the Keeners say 'tis the chief of the Clan Tiegs of Arranmore, who is gone to glory. But young father Francis has stopped the Chree and the Keeners, the greatest in the prowence; and there they are now going their least round, and the shular man, 'bove all, bearing the cross afore the corpse, and come in from the mountains, with the Connemura boys, to help the berrin down the lake; and a fine berrin it is, and —"

She had now approached the bed, with the drink, which she had been busily preparing for her patient, against he should awaken; but he again lay as one in a deep slumber, his eyes closed, his lips compressed, and his colour

deadly pale. When his medical attendants entered the room, they found him with a pulse that scarcely beat, and a breath that scarcely sullied the mirror presented to his lips. Nature had undergone some great revulsion, some terrible shock had been given to the nerves, through the feelings. That shock was the sudden announcement of a father's death, when the mind, all unstrung, was deprived of every energy, and unsupported by any principle of resistance to the overwhelming impression.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CONFRATERNITY.

C'est pousser la politesse bien loin, que de se faire aimer de ceux qu'on outrage, et de savoir si bien porter les coups dont on les perce, qu'ils ne s'en aperçoivent point.

Lettres Juives, t. 5, p. 386.

Hail to the bright brief spring of human existence, in which care sits lightly, like clouds on a summer sky; from which sorrow flies fleetly, like mists on the morning breeze; and to which health returns with rapid revulsion, as the steel rebounds by its own elasticity, on the removal of a temporary pressure.

About three weeks from the death of the unfortunate Lord Arranmore, and on the morning of a fine July day, there sat, and thought, and wrote, in the deep embrasure of a bay window of the library of the confraternity, one who was the very personification of mental energy, rapt in the boldest dreams of speculative philosophy. An eye clear, full, and upturned, — high, intellectual, and unshaded temples, catching the ray of yellow light that struggled through the half drawn curtain, — the rich hectic hue of the blood propelled by

thought over a cheek of marble paleness, —and a soul-illumined look, playing over a somewhat melancholy countenance, that „o'er informed its tenement of clay," combined to render the writer, as he sat in the happiest disposition of light and shade, habited in solemn black, and leaning on his elbow, one of those studies, which *virtù* has somewhat conventionally assigned to the exclusive execution of Rembrandt's inspired pencil. Who, in this fine form of intellectual life and physical energy, would have recognized the frail and feeble frame, which, three weeks before, lay struck in helpless alienation of mind on the couch of sickness? Yet such is youth, the all we know of the privileges of immortality. Such lately had been, and such now was Murrogh O'Brien. For the last four days of his convalescence, breathing the purest air, basking in the soft sunshine, gazing on the finest views, enjoying the most delightful of all sensations, a calm sequestration, with agreeable but not exciting society, surrounded by books, whose very external form rouses the mind of genius to meditation, O'Brien felt as one regenerated by probationary suffering; and with spirits the most genial, and ideas clear, distinct, and current, he employed the first days of his restoration to health on the subject, which in sickness and in health had lain nearest to his heart.

He had, while in college, begun a pamphlet „On the State of Ireland;" and he was now occupied in finishing, revising, and clearing it off for the press. It was written with eloquence and enthusiasm, evincing that its author had felt more than he had thought on his subject. It was full of truths that were libels, and of general observations, personally applicable to certain obnoxious individuals in the council and the senate, whom popular indignation had already marked out for popular reprobation. It was honest and injudicious, and eminently perilous to the fearless writer; who, in the uncompromising probity of youth, saw only the end, and was careless of the means (as they affected himself) by which that end was to be attained.

O'Brien had already from his bed, and as soon as his hand could grasp a pen, written to Lord Walter, to account for his sudden departure, and his long silence as to its cause; and to renew his pledge to the band of well intentioned patriots, into whose service he promised to enter, as soon as his renovated health should render him capable of the mission they had honoured him with. He had been cheered by a kind, cordial, and immediate answer, full of expressions of confidence in his integrity, his honour, and devotion to the great cause, which, said Lord Walter, „not even your Hegira or marvellous flight, under the protect-

ing wing of Ignatius Loyola, could weaken or destroy. For I do believe that you are, at this moment, in the keeping of that warrior saint; and that your 'amiable confraternity,' of which you speak, is but a resuscitation of those once sovereign lords of the will and intellect of the human race, who did but follow the vocation that man has ever acknowledged, to rule and dupe his brother man." O'Brien had more cogent reasons for believing what Lord Walter did but jocosely suggest. Yet for the moment, more amused than affected by the conviction, he willingly profited by his strange position.

From the epoch of his most singular *enlèvement* by his father, when under the influence of the strongest feelings, and excited by the feverish malady that was circulating in his veins,—from that moment when a delirious sleep and unconscious vigils had exposed him to the unwholesome airs and mists of night, his mind had been so feeble and confused, that he found an infinite difficulty in connecting his thoughts, or even in giving utterance to the solicitous curiosity, which perpetually prompted him to inquire from his father the mysterious circumstances of his recent unhappy life. One phantom, however, still floated perpetually before him,—the suspected agent of his father's wishes, the singular mask! But what he had asked concerning her, what his father had answered during the terrible

night of their journey, or whether he had indeed made any inquiries, or received any satisfactory information, he could not now, even on his perfect recovery, recollect. The form of this person, who had pre-occupied his last conscious moments, had incessantly haunted him during his illness; and her voice, in a variety of languages, of tones, and inflexions, had sounded in his ears. Sometimes her image had taken the form of Lady Knocklofty, sometimes of a Sister of Charity, praying by his pillow. Sometimes, he thought he detected her in the garb of the nurse, of a priest, and of the superior of the Jesuits; for her ide best assorted with the wild incoherent images of a powerful fancy, relieved from all restraints of judgment and ratiocination.

The little information he had been enabled to acquire, or retain, of Lord Arranmore's fortunes, having been asked under feelings of more determined interest and upon more positive data, with which the passions and the imagination had nothing to do, had so well assorted with his previous knowledge of the order to which his father had bound himself body and soul (a fact he soon learned), that by inference and reflection on the concatenation of events, and by some information secretly given him by the physician who had attended his father in his last moments, he was enabled to draw a perfect conclusion, which led to the

clearing up of the last act of Lord Arranmore's fitful life.

The early victim of a persecuting proselytism had abjured his enforced faith, connected as it was with the deepest wrongs and bitterest humiliations. Terence O'Brien, in his tenth year, tke little sacristan of the mass cave, — in the vigour of his manhood, the protestant solicitor and high church partisan, — in his later life, had become a relapsed papist, and died in all the probationary martyrdom of a noviciate of the Jesuits. To the services of this order he had unconsciously been bound for the last twenty years, under the prevailing influence of his zealous and pertinacious uncle, the Abbate O'Brien, of Rome. To the services of this order he had been induced to devote his only son, from that period of his life, when dawning into adolescence, he exhibited such qualities as might render him an efficient and brilliant member of any society, and a support of any cause to which he should bring the full force of his natural endowments.

The first object of Lord Arranmore, under his relapsed principles, had been to separate his son from his protestant mother and aunts; and to have him secretly, but, as it were, accidentally, educated by the accomplished parish priest of Moycullen, the Abbé O'Flaherty. The retired habits of the Abbé, so displaced in the

sphere to which obedience to the church had called him, had promoted the well concealed designs of his father, by removing the boy from the observation of the protestant authorities of St Grellan, until, to evade persecution in his own person, Terence O'Brien was obliged to enter his son a pupil of the diocesan school. Devoted by early oppression to perpetual evasion, Terence was himself a party to his son's flight to France, after the execution of his foster-brother, Shane-na-Brien. The supposed loss of her son broke his tender mother's heart; and this event drew, to its utmost tension, the remorseful bigotry of the proselyted, but still conforming father; and he resolved on expiating the self-attributed crime of his wife's death, by the offering of his child on the altar of religion, where, like Isaac, he lay bound and ready for immolation.

The keen perceptions of O'Briens highly organized mind, in accordance with the strongest prejudices against Jesuitism instilled by his Jansenist preceptor, and with a deep sentiment in favour of religious reformation, implanted by his protestant mother, enabled him to break through the bonds, in which the zeal and intrigue of his father had involved him: and once convinced that he was completing his often interrupted education in a Jesuit institution, for Jesuit purposes,—with the boldness of a strong volition, he fled. Fortune, or his own

high qualities, led him on through a changeful, but not undistinguished career. His strange destiny had given him the start of the home-bred youth, who ripens into maturity unpractised and undeveloped; subject to the influences of time, without the enjoyments and experience, which is alone purchaseable by bustling activity and arduous enterprise.

Saddened by the recollection of his father's evident prostration of mind, he was still soothed by the reflection that Lord Arranmore had derived gratification from the hope of extricating him from what he believed a perilous conspiracy with heretics and infidels (for such he had esteemed the protestant and presbyterian bands of reformists, which constituted the society of the United Irishmen). There was likewise another tie, which Lord Arranmore and the Abbate O'Brien had evidently wished to break, — a tie so vague, so undeveloped, so delicate, and (as O'Brien had thought) so unknown to all but his own thoughts, that he could not but wonder at the quick perception, secret information, and fastidious jealousy, with which it had been watched and thwarted. Nor could he comprehend, how that which was almost a secret to himself, should have been thus divined by two old men: in one of whom the sources of passion had been dried up from infancy, by a vocation, which had broken through all social ties; while the other, simple

and credulous, and involved in temporal embarrassments and spiritual conflicts, must have had but little thought or time to start at a *liaison*, which had as yet led to nothing, and had perhaps already ended in bitter mortification and disappointment. Yet his confederacy with the United Irishmen, and his incipient predilection for the Countess Knocklofty, had been hinted at by the mysterious mask, who, he was almost convinced, acted in the service of his Jesuit relations. Who was she? a foreigner evidently, or one who had long lived in foreign lands; one who knew him personally, and who had twice sought him out, in Italy and in Ireland, and who had parted from him as lightly on each occasion, as she had met him, in fanciful mystery and careless pleasantry. If his father had known her, the secret had died with him; if she was known to his grand uncle, the secret was equally buried as if in the oblivion of the tomb. For though the Abbate O'Brien was then occupying the same dwelling with him, and was apparently the superior of the confraternity, to which his looks were laws, yet he held but little personal communication with any, nor suffered anything to transpire, but what he chose to impart; and that was so little, that O'Brien since his convalescence, had seen the awful old man but once, — when their intercourse was limited to a few cold inquiries after his

health, and condolences on his father's death, spoken in Italian, and in the presence of a person who acted as a sort of Camerlingo, a foreigner and member of some religious order.

While the active fancy of O'Brien was thus fed by vague conjectures on one point, on every other he saw his way clearly. Considered intimately, and in all its bearings, the prospect was not brilliant; but as long as it lay distinctly before him, there was that within, which rendered him confident in his powers to grapple with difficulties, and to vanquish obstacles. His father had left him heir only to his misfortunes, and his ancient name; his debts, as he had told his son, had been paid out of funds, destined by that singular order the Jesuits, to liberate from worldly embarrassments, such as they might require to abandon the world for their service. Lord Arranmore's peculiar endowments were knowledge of the Irish language and customs, and his popularity with the lower orders: both powerfully available in a system, which in its first resuscitation was contented to grasp at what it *could*, until it should become capable of attaining the all it desired.

With respect to the absolute mendicity to which O'Brien had found his father reduced (a state so much at variance with the imagined donation of fifty pounds to his son, and with the protection afforded him by the order of

which, by his own confession, he had taken the first vows), O'Brien had heard with a mingled sensation of pleasure and indignation, that this alms asking was one of his six spiritual exercises, or probationary experiments; and that he had availed himself of the circumstance to attack the feelings of his son, and to give more influence to the offers he was commissioned to make him. These offers were, that he should become a member of a society to which his energy and endowments might prove serviceable, which would give him the boundless command of wealth, without its responsibility and anxieties, and which might eventually place him in a sphere for centuries occupied by the direct successors of Ignatius himself, the counsellor of kings, the director of popes, the sovereign of sovereigns, the umpire of nations, and in the profane but expressive language of the institution, the „*Jesus locum Dei tenens in terra.*"

The price of a destiny thus splendid, so fabulous in sound, yet once enjoyed in fact, was no sacrifice of the passions or pleasures of life. It was but the firm internal resolution, the tacit, but solemn and irrevocable vow to live and die exclusively devoted to the interests, views, and principles of the society, by a blind and perfect obedience to its decrees, and „*prostration* * *of all will, virtue, and science*," to

* Query — Was it from the Jesuits that the Bishop of London borrowed this oft-quoted phrase? or, did

every order of the superior, „such as Abraham evinced in the sacrifice of his son." But this great mental vow, this „internal desire," and „voluntary engagement under a tacit condition," required no enforcement from monastic professions, no conventual privation and retreat. It imposed no habit, to mark by external forms, an internal separation from that world, to which its mission was wholly devoted. The Jesuit was not less a Jesuit in courts and camps, than in colleges and congregations; in the saloon of the mundane than in the cell of the ascetic; in the cabinet or the academy, than in the cloister of the *Ignorantins*; in the bowers of beauty, and in the halls of wealth and pleasure, than in the impervious forests of Valombrosa; or the trackless snows of St Bernard.

This brilliant and flattering proposition had no attraction for one, whose principles and prejudices were alike armed against it. In another age, and another aspect of society, it might have tempted his ambition, seduced his passions, and given him up unreservedly to an order, which then governed the most powerful states of Europe, and influenced the happiness, and checked the progressive illumination of millions.

---

it arise in his mind as a necessary result of that universal spirit of domination, common to the high churchmen of all religions?

In answering the paragraph in Lord Walter's letter on this subject, O'Brien observed,

„Your suspicions of the attempted revival of Jesuitism are better founded, than your apprehension of my subjection to their system. I have a charmed life, and none of Jesuit-breed can hurt Macbeth. I was brought up by my Jansenist preceptor, under the especial invocation and protection of that saint of all heretics, St Augustin; and long before reason meddled with inquiry, I had drawn my tenets against the doctrines of Loyola from the *'vérités académiques'* of that arch infidel D'Alembert,* which were placed in my hands by my dear Abbé O'Flaherty. For, hating the tribe of encyclopedists, as Le Tellier himself would have done, had he lived in their reign, the disciple of Jansen could set aside his prejudices in favour of his doctrine; and he permitted his young pupil to look into the pages of the chief of a party, for which he believed there was no salvation. So malleable are men's principles, when brought into contest with their opinions. My Abbé, by the bye, was the very Pascal of modern times: and as I was occasionally employed as his secretary, and twice copied his admirable answers to *'Le Jansénis-*

* D'Alembert wrote to show that the public would sustain no loss by the suppression of Jesuitical instruction, and to point out the defects in their system of education, both in the higher and lower classes.

me confondu' (a *brochure de circonstance*, from the secret press of the suppressed Jesuits), I sucked in my antidote, before the delicious poison of Loyola was distilled into my ears,—as it afterwards was by the zeal of my grand-uncle, and the subtile eloquence of his coadjutors; some of whom are at this moment my agreeable companions and hospitable hosts at Cong. Not to terrify you by the astounding fact, you are to know that I have some reason to believe, that I am indeed, as you jocosely suggested, in the hands of the Jesuits; and literally an inmate of one of their new probationary houses. But all will not do. I am a very type of the generation, against whose freedom the old *sbirri* of religion are secretly arming, under the encouragement of that double-minded Pope, Pius the Sixth. How much the old tact of the order is blunted, is apparent in their application of means to ends, which are totally inadequate to the exigencies of the age: if they continue in this old tack, they are lost. Some royal penitent, like Louis the XIV. may cherish them; some narrow-minded monk, elevated to the papal throne, may revive them and princes and governments may deem it useful to protect them; but the force of circumstances, that force to which princes and nations must alike submit, that force of which Wickliff, and Luther, and Calvin, were merely instruments,—which produced the dispersion

of the Jesuits, and of which Ganganelli was but the agent, will effectually prevent the successful employment of arts, adapted to another age, and to another constitution of human society. When learning and opinion were in a few hands, and the mass of mankind were sunk in ignorance and mental inactivity, the current of thought might be checked, or directed, by a well combined conspiracy of the few. But now, that the whole world is in movement, that nations are alive to their own interests, and reflect on their own affairs, the education which the public gives to itself absorbs and neutralizes the instruction prepared for it by governments and hierarchies, whenever the results of both do not coincide. Open or secret, the confederacy to govern by misleading must fail, where the many have an interest in detecting its fallacies, and a ready agent for giving utterance to their thoughts. To govern the age in which we live, ambitious spirits must place themselves at its head; and to controul opinion, they must advance it. The people and the press are irresistible; and should the Jesuits again be revived, and their obsolete education again be forced upon nations by royal authority, the force put upon thought will only serve to make it expand with additional resilience.

„Still, great efforts are making in Italy to revive this long influential order. In fact, they

have never really been suppressed; and though their superb palaces, called colleges, have been closed, and their classes dispersed, yet they have always maintained their congregations, their confraternities and their secret affiliations, religious and laical; which have kept up a partial influence on the feeble, the ignorant, and the voluptuous (no small portion of society in all ages). While some monastic orders leaned to the stoics, and others to the platonists, the Jesuits were ever partisans of the philosophy of Epicurus. One of their elegant and sumptuous congregations at Paris, *'La Congrégation des Messieurs,'* was still to be traced by its *débris*, when my father brought me from Bordeaux, to place me a scholar in a newnamed seminary of the suppressed order, in the Rue St Jacques. The house *'des Messieurs'* was a temple of pleasure; holy altars had been removed, that theatres might be erected, and dramas were gotten up and acted by the noble catechumens, which rivalled the pious private theatricals of St Cyr.

„By means of one of these congregations (secretly favoured by the present pope and the sovereigns of Italy), assisted by that sex which brings such powerful aid to any cause it adopts, they are again endeavouring to revive their order. The name of this new association is *'La devozione del sagro cuore di Gesù.'* The foundress of this order is a young and beauti-

ful *religieuse*, an *élève* of the Jesuits, and an uncloistered nun, of the *Bambin Gesù* monastery, and afterwards of the Florentine convent, suppressed by Leopold. Rich, or reported to be rich, greatly gifted, and highly organized, with talents for all the arts, cultivated with all the success which industry and ambition ever bring with them, this modern St Theresa, when I was in Italy, not only made her fine voice heard above all less melodious sounds in the choir of her convent, but, it is said, in the oratories of princes and the cabinets of cardinals. Acting under the direction of her masters the Jesuits, it was she who obtained from the pope, through the influence of her friend the Cardinal Rezzonico, leave to found a perpetual mass *'in honorem sacrosancti cordis Jesu,'* and she obtained indulgences for the congregation, showered upon her *a larga mano*.

„I heard her once sing in her choir at Rome, when it was the fashion to do so; and the impression left by her tone and style has never since gone from my mind. I saw her also veiled and draped as a priestess of antiquity, carrying the *sagro cuore* in a procession in honour of the new worship; and there was a life and a grace in her movement and air, which recalled all that is most admired in the antique relievos of the capitol. Imagine the aid such a creature must bring to a cause, which especially addresses itself to human passions and

human weakness. You will laugh when I tell you, that I am not quite sure, that these offsets of Jesuitism are not even here employing a similar agency in their little way; and that some sister Bridget is not doubling the part of *'la Sorella Irene,'* of the convent *'del Gesù'* of Rome. I certainly saw a female figure, of a most mysterious appearance, among the falling ruins of O'Brien House. She escaped miraculously, by means, which may yet discover to me her name and vocation. Should I tell your lordship of other phantoms which have crossed my path in the female 'form divine,' you would deem the relation a wreck of my feverish delirium, and laugh at the poetic visions of typhus. Still let me caution you, should you again trust yourself to a Dublin masquerade, and be accosted by a creature, light and evanescent as the

Gay motes that people the sunbeam;

should you find in her the humour of Sevigné, the philosophy of Tencin, with the form of a sylph and the foot of a fairy, should you find that she knows you *au fond*, and plays you off in an epigram, then fear and fly her, for she certainly is a concealed — Jesuitess. Meantime I confess that some of the spell of Loyola is upon me; and that if I had a vocation to wear out my youth 'in shapeless idleness,' I should hang up my arms in the library of the religious gentlemen of Cong.

„Their society at present includes a few French and Italian emigrants, who have fled from the obnoxious lights of the revolution, and from what they call the persecutions of the Grand Duke Leopold in Tuscany; who has suppressed many convents in his charming dominions, as being under the influence of the Jesuits, and as engaged in the furtherance of their system. Here are also some English and Irishmen, laymen and seculars, evidently retired soldiers of the disbanded army of Loyola; who have weathered out the storms, which, as they say, the mighty spirit of infidelity has conjured up against them. My great uncle, the Abbate, stands apart from all, living rather among them than with them. His dark, despotic and overbearing character retains nothing of its former energy, except what wastes itself in impotent efforts at the reinstatement of his order, in which his own prolonged life is bound up. His residence here is, it seems, but temporary; and with habits isolated as his manner is imperious, he passes his time shut up in solitary supremacy; and permits the society to indulge in the *'sainte oisiveté'* of the canons of Boileau.

„As yet, they have made no attempts at proselyting, nor opened any classes; though they now speak frankly of their calling, as a branch of the accomplished society of Stonihurst: which has lately pledged its allegiance to the king

and government,* and is much respected as a loyal and religious community, and as much opposed to the revolutionary epidemia of the day, as the most furious partizans of protestant ascendancy. All Jesuits as they are, they are evidently protected by the very government that makes a vital point of withholding catholic emancipation.

„The contrast of this society, with that in which I have for years been mingling, is extremely pleasant; and suits alike to my present state of mind and of health. Their habits suit my present tastes, and leave me free from all 'restraint of hospitable zeal.' Shut up in their cells all day, or occupied abroad in farming, or in lounging through the romantic scenery of the neighbourhood, they hold at night a circle in their library, which might rival the *mercuriales* of Menage. It is amusing to observe with what vigour they go over the old ground of the *démêlé* of Père Bonhours, and the Trissotins of the Sévignés and the Deshoulières; with what fervid controversy they argue for and against the decision of Daubignac, *'sur combien d'heures a duré l'action de l'Heautontimorumenos'* of Terence. Here are still preserved the feuds of Perrault and Dacier. The names, bandied from mouth to mouth, are not D'Alembert, Diderot, Condorcet, Vol-

* Anno 1791.

taire or Volney; but Heinsius, Scaliger, Balzac, Vaugelas and Voiture; whose works enrich the shelves of their library, and, with some good editions of the classics, lives of Loyola, tracts against Jansen, Spectators and Guardians, '*discours sur les agrémens de l'esprit*,' essays, '*sur la délicatesse du goût*,' treatises '*de honesta voluptate*,' make up the catalogue of its contents.

„As yet, not one word has been addressed to me, from which I can deduce a perseverance in those views which my unfortunate father entertained for me. But so premeditated has been my residence here, that in the chamber in which I have been installed since my recovery, I have not only found all my clothes, books, and escrutoire which I left in my college-rooms,—but its white-washed walls are covered with the pictures of those of my ancestors, who were founders and protectors of churches and monasteries. Some of these I recently missed from my father's old mansion, of which you must have retained a fearful recollection.

„There are two pictures also, which, from the freshness of their tints, have been repaired or recently painted. One is a very characteristic portrait of General Lord Inchiquin, a celebrated apostate of our family, who joined the republican party under Cromwell. He is painted in his youth, and in the fanciful dress of Charles the First's court, which he visited

with his father, when a boy. What is singularly ridiculous in this (to such little arts do these ingenious men descend) is, that it is a striking, though flattering likeness of myself. The young Lord Inchiquin is represented leaning his hand on a table, on which stands a golden crucifix, with a label beneath, inscribed '*Sub hoc signo vinces.*' The other picture is a representation of the siege of the cathedral and rock of Cashel, by the same pervert O'Brien.* He is here represented, mounted on a spirited charger, his sword bathed in the blood of a prostrate bishop, trampled upon by his steed. His countenance scarcely preserving a trace of the youthful calmness of his portrait, is disfigured by the fiercest passions. The beautiful Gothic windows of the cathedral are lighted by flames bursting from the

*Le peuple consterné aux approches de ce tyran, cherche en vain un asile dans l'église cathédrale. Les lieux saints ne furent pas des remparts assurés contre des coeurs barbares, Inchiquin fit donner l'assaut, et ordonna aux soldats de ne faire quartier à personne. Le massacre fut grand dans l'église, et au dehors: personne n'échappa. On compta environ vingt ecclésiastiques, tant séculiers que réguliers, égorgés dans cette occasion, sans parler d'une multitude de peuple. Il se faisait un plaisir barbare de brûler partout les villages, les maisons, et les biens des habitans; c'est ce que lui fit donner le nom de *Murrough an toithaine*, c'est-à-dire Murrough l'incendiaire, — nom sous lequel il est encore connu dans cette province, où sa mémoire est en horreur,— *Hist. d'Irlande, tom. iii, p.* 682.

body of the church, which were said to have been kindled by Inchiquin himself, and to have consumed twenty ecclesiastics. Rising above the flame and smoke that issue from its dome, appears the Archbishop of Cashel in all the pomp of his holy vestments, and all the sublimity of martyrdom. He is in the act of pronouncing that dreadful prophecy, which predicted that every curse should fall upon the family of 'the incendiary,' to be redeemed only, through the expiating zeal of some distant descendant. Underneath is written 'The Siege of Cashel by O'Brien the incendiary, who denied his God, betrayed his king, and died the victim of his crimes in 1650.'

„The picture is painted by some artist in the service of the confraternity; for I saw a facsimile in miniature, among the illuminations of an old family chronicle, in my father's possession, called the Green Book of St Grellan; which by the bye, was recovered from the ruins of the old house, and now lies on my table.

„And now, my dear lord, having thus 'prated to you of my whereabouts,' for the present, I have nothing to communicate of the future; which lies before me, vague and indistinct as the prospect that my window commands. The surface appears full of inequalities: there are swamps to sink in, and acclivities to be mastered; but there are also bright points, which may be attained, ere the night of age closes upon the

hopes of life; and there are vallies and glens to fly to ere peril overtake the wanderer, or persecution strike its fangs into its victim.

„I shall leave this charming retreat carly in the ensuing week. Since I began this letter, a circumstance has occurred to hasten my departure. The constituted authorities here, have found out that the invalid of the religious community is a member of the United Irishmen, and the student of Trinity College, lately expelled for atheism and sedition. They have had an interview with my uncle, who coldly and haughtily commanded me to rebut the charge, by denying it. I have of course declined to deny a fact, in which I glory, that I am an United Irishman; or refute an absurd calumny, of whose falsehood they who circulate it are best aware. I mean therefore to visit the neighbourhood of my native town of St Grellan, on an invitation long given me by my mother's sisters, two maiden ladies, who have declared me the heir to the bogs and rabbit burroughs on their estate, in the borders of Jar Connaught. I shall not through 'Eden take my solitary way,' but through Connemara; passing over the magnificent masses of water of Corrib. Direct your next to the Post office, St Grellan; and let the society issue their orders to theirs and your devoted servant."

CHAPTER VII.

THE CAVES OF CONG.

Profonda era, e nebulosa,
Tanto che per ficcar lo viso al fondo,
Io non vi discerneva alcuna cosa.

DANTE.

Questa è l'antica e memorabil grotta
. . . . . .
. . . Donde uno donna uscio.

ARIOSTO.

O'BRIEN's political authorship had occupied him for two days incessantly; and on the evening of the third, having sealed up his pamphlet with his letter to Lord Walter, he walked into the town of Cong to deliver it to the host of the old inn, who was going, on the following morning, „up to Dublin, to state case, and take counsel, in regard of a bid of an estate in Joyce's country, to which he had every right in life, called Betagh's land to this day." The packet was directed to Mr Fitzpatrick, bookseller, Capel-street, Dublin; and Pat Betagh having reiterated his assurances of its safe delivery, invited O'Brien „just to step in and take a tumbler with a few gentleman, his particular friends, who had got their feei under

his mahogany, and were drinking to his speed, success, and safe return."

The hospitable invitation was declined, with as much courtesy, and earnestness as it was given; and O'Brien, almost suffocated with the fumes of punch and tobacco, which issued from the parlour, where Mr Betagh's friends were taking the stirrup-cup, hasted from the close atmosphere of the ruined street of Cong, to the shores of its lovely river. His head ached intensely, from the arduous occupation of the entire day; his limbs were cramped and stiff from sedentary confinement; and as he issued from the smoky cabins, and noise of pigs, children, and dogs, he felt the fresh air as it come down in cooling breezes from the mountains, flow with a voluptuous influence on his brows, and gradually relax their painful tension.

In taking the course of the river, which, rising in the mountains, flows into Lough Corrib, and bathes, as it passes, the abbey ruins, O'Brien paused to observe the deep etching of the tower and cloistered walls upon the placid stream, relieved by the setting sun; and his train of thought involuntarily led him to penetrate the ruins, and examine their details, with more interest than he had hitherto done. In quoting largely in his pamphlet from the very Irish history of the Abbé Mac Geogheghan, written in such very pure French, he had

pitched upon the story of Roderick O'Connor, the last supreme King of Ireland, and his final retreat into the Abbey of Cong. It was here (thought O'Brien, as he passed the refectory), here, perhaps, on this very spot, that O'Connor, while yet supreme King of Ireland, gave secret rendezvous to his dear friend and ally, Donald O'Brien, King of Munster: and it was under the benediction of the Abbot that both had marched against that impious son, who had always sought the ruin and dead of his father, in whose life-time he had usurped his throne. It was here that, in affliction for his domestic and national misfortunes, the royal Roderick retired, resigning his barren sceptre to his son, Canchovar, „*où il employa*," says his historian, „*le reste de sa vie, qui fut de treize ans, à se préparer pour l'éternité.*"

The sun was pouring down from the summits of Ben Leven, a flood of light upon the tomb of the unfortunate Roderick,* as O'Brien approached it. The monument was fast sinking to the earth, and was covered with rank weeds and briars. As he threw himself upon the long grass beside it, resting his right arm on the carved fragment of a mullioned window, while with his left hand he plucked away the

---

*Mac Geogheghan, who wrote in a foreign country, was not aware of his tomb's existence; for he says, «Son corps fut transporté de Cong à Clauma-canoise, et enterré avec pompe dans cette église.»

dark night-shade which covered the ashes of royalty, he gave himself up to reverie, such as the place, the hour, and his own dark fortunes inspired; for the sunshine of the morning had faded from his spirits. The close of the natural day has something in it of the dreariness which belongs to the close of life; a dreariness to which the literary lalourer is especially susceptible. The fatigue by which man earns his daily bread, forces on the strongest the „penalty of Adam;" but the exhaustion of mental occupation, the terrible wearing of intellectual exertion (for the deep despondency of which, physical suffering has no parallel), pay back the fatal pre-eminence of genius, at a price the dullest would not envy.

O'Brien, weary from the toil of creative composition, sighed as he sat by the grave of O'Connor, and again smiled in humorous sadness, at the services performed by his ancestor Donald O'Brien, to the heroic Roderick, as contrasted with those which he himself was now discharging, in weeding his grassy and neglected tomb. While thus employed in thoughts that led to a conviction of the nothingness of all things, of the brevity of life's fitful malady (at best a paroxysm), and of the wisdom of those, who, like Roderick O'Connor, withdraw themselves from its unavailing struggles, he was suddenly roused from his sombre reflections, by a gentle rustle among the shrubs

which grew upon a buttress of the venerable pile, near which he sat. A startled raven fled from his nest in the adjoining gable; and O'Brien, as he looked and listened, thought he heard the heavy footsteps of some ponderous visitant, dying along the cloisters. They faded on the air, and he again sunk upon his elbow, and fixed his eyes on the distant heights of Connemara, for which he was soon about to leave the comforts of his present retreat.

Again the sound of footsteps, with a crushing fall, seemed to approach him. He raised himself erect from the grass, but saw nothing: and all became again silent and solitary. Meantime, the surrounding scenery tinted into more perfect and picturesque beauty. The foreground, chequered by the massive shadows of the cloistered pile, gradually fell into deeper gloom; while a flood of yellow light poured through a Gothic door-way which was richly chiselled in its cornices with grotesque devices, and the grim heads of saints and monsters. One of these, seen imperfectly through the masses of trailing plants, seemed almost human; and O'Brien drew forth his tablets and pencil, and applied himself in the last glimmer of sunlight to sketch the gate. While thus occupied, he thought the head almost moved, and that the eye glistened with life and light. He sprang forward, to view it nearer, but it had disappeared; and, convinced that some-

thing living had introduced itself among the nondescripts of Gothic structure, he was resolved to hunt down the original he had been drawing. The fleetness of the object of his pursuit, evaded even his rapid bounds; and just as he saw the figure skim along the walls of the refectory, and glide into what is still called the Abbey kitchen, he fell over a fragment of the building. The next moment, however, he was on his feet, and then he again saw the figure standing beyond the convent wall, on the bank of the river. Wrapped as it was in a closely veiling mantle, he distinctly recognized that the person before him was short and square. There was something so suspicious in this evasion, that it reanimated his pursuit; when the low and melancholy winding of a rural cornet or horn, arrested his steps, and he again saw the object of his curiosity (as if startled from its covert by the sound), spring forward and escape beyond the ruins. When again he perceived it, it was standing on a dreary heath; but it was no longer of the same dimensions; the short, square from, now stood lofty, gaunt, and erect.

Though half doubtful of the identity of the individual, O'Brien still followed, till, almost breathless with fatigue, he was within a few yards of his object, and then the vision, or phantom, suddenly sunk in the earth and disappeared. O'Brien stood thunderstruck and

aghast. The spot to which his chase had led him, was a dreary heath, speckled with a few isolated white rocks, and fragments of a druidical Cromlech. No shrub, or tree, or patch of vegetation cheered the scene; save that where the figure had vanished, a clumb of old scathed oaks stood, woven and draped with ivy and creeping plants. O'Brien, as he slowly and breathlessly approached them, recalled the tales of fairies and lepraghauns, with which the Irish nurse had amused him during his convalescence.

He had now reached the spot where this vision which „seemed not of the inhabitants of the earth, and yet was on it," had made its escape; and he discovered a circular cavity, which, as he looked down, appeared to afford a ready descent by rude steps, cut in the rocky sides of a perpendicular depth of more than an hundred feet. The gurgling of water was heard, and some brilliant points of light were visible beneath. He descended with eager haste, and found himself alone in a dark and vaulted chamber of the rock. The twilight whose rays fell from the aperture above, on the spot immediately beneath it, reflected in rich tints from the dripping verdure, which trailed in festoons and garlands over the interior of the cavern, and glittered with the brilliant hues of the emerald. Further on, in the opening cavity, stalactites and sparry incrustations caught the

fading light, and reflected it in silvery points. Beneath rolled a broad and limpid river, whose source and exit were alike lost in the distant gloom.

O'Brien, as he proceeded with imprudent fearlessness, now first suspected that he was in the Caves of Cong, which his kind hosts had induced him to defer visiting, until the more perfect restoration of his health. But neither health nor danger were now thought of. As he groped his way along, shadowy glimpses of the mysterious figure were caught, and lost in the windings of the cave, still urging him forward; when his steps were suddenly arrested by a female form, which for a moment appeared to his dazzled eyes, weird and wild as the sybil, that led Æneas, in grottos scarcely more poetical. The apparition had darted from behind a projecting rock, with a dimly-burning brand, which her breath seemed to kindle into flame. Then setting fire to a bundle of straw, which she took from a basket on her arm, she flung it on the water, to float down the stream. Casting the glowing brand upon the rocks as she retreated, its red glare was reflected on the sparry roof, and fell upon the walls of the far retiring cavity. O'Brien had heard that a person answering to this fantastic appearance, was the oracle of these Cumean mysteries; and, divided between the thick coming fancies of his excited imagination, and

his disposition to laugh at them, he was about to follow, and to reward her, for the effect she had so ingeniously produced, when another object for the moment drew off his attention. It was the person, whose evident desire to escape had led him into the cave; and who now rushing on him, seized him in his arms, and held him in an embrace of gigantic force, while he muttered in Irish what might be a blessing, or an incantation. He then as suddenly disappeared.

In the deep guttural accents, and in that iron clasp of strength and tenderness, O'Brien recognized his foster brother; but he called upon him in vain. Whatever was the cause of this reluctance to appear, he found it impossible, either by soothing solicitations to recall him, or by his own efforts to pursue him through the Cimmerian darkness, in which the extinction of the brands had left the cavern. He turned, therefore, to ask assistance from the priestess of the temple, but she too was gone. The event was singular; for she had asked no gratuity, and the fleetness of her steps belonged not to the feeble limbs of age. Yet if he had hunted Shane to these melancholy caves, who was the secret spy upon his solitary meditations in the ruins of the Abbey?

He now had only to grope his way back to the opening of the grotto. When he emerged, the mists of night were already fast settling

on the dreary land-scape; and the gloomy ray of many a rushlight, streaming through the casements of the cabins of Cong, directed his steps homeward. At the entrance of the village he stopped to inquire of some children, for the dwelling of the guide to the caves; and one of the urchins led the way to her cabin, which stood lone and mouldering on the edge of the Abbey grounds. He found her at her wheel in the chimney corner, spinning by a rushlight fixed in a cleft stick, fastened in the smoky beam, which traversed the chimney. He was struck by the contrast of her aged and haggard appearance, with the lightness of foot, and celerity of movement which had evaded his pursuit. „I am come," he said, taking a piece of silver from his pocket, „to thank and remunerate you for the pleasure you have afforded me, by lighting up the caves, and to beg that you will accompany me there to-morrow."

„Och, yez are welcome, and thousands," replied the old woman, snatching at the money, and dropping it eagerly into a pouch at her side, „and its when was it, that I did that same, a jewel machree? for I never seed your sweet comely face afore, that I mind."

„When?" said O'Brien, in amazement: „this evening, now, when you just left me in the caves, not half an hour back."

„Is it me?" said the old woman raising, her voice to the shrill pitch of terror. „Oh! mille murther! A wurrustrew the day and Jasus

keep me, amen. It was my fetch you saw, surely; if you saw the likes of me at all, at all, Mavourneen dhû; for haven't cross'd thres-hol, barring once't to mass, since Easter, in regard of the rheumatrix. Och! Jasus, queen of glory, look down upon me this night, and take me to comfort; for the death watch is out for me," — and she wiped the stream from her eyes. „And how is it I came upon yez, dear?" she continued; „was it in my fine white winding sheet which lies there in the box con-vanient?" Or was it in my ould cloak, and binogue, and crutch, and basket, and flint, and rushlights?"

„No," said O'Brien, „I saw nothing of all this; you were wrapped in a mantle."

He paused as the old woman had impulsive-ly risen, her eyes and mouth extended on the stretch of superstitious curiosity and personal solicitude; and then added „No, now I per-ceive it could not be you; the figure was taller and slighter."

The old woman reseated herself at her wheel, delighted to be restored to a life which, though in the midst of pain, poverty, and age, had still charms for her. „God is good, and his blessed Mother, amen," she said: „Glory be to the saints, I am to the fore still. No, honey, dear, it wasn't me, nor the likes of me, nor my arrach neither, but a great lady, glory to her name and memory, amen."

„Indeed," said O'Brien, „and who was it?"

„Och, there's no harm done," said the old woman, turning round her wheel briskly, and casting a fearful eye round her desolate hovel, „there's no harm done, for she brings luck wherever she appears; sure it's only the *abmhasther*, the Abbess's ghost."

„The Abbess! what Abbess?"

„Why, the Abbess Beavoin O'Flaherty."

O'Brien started.

„Och, in truth," continued the old woman, „she comes over from the castle in Lough Corrib, Caisthla na Kirka, and is seen in Cong Abbey, and betimes in the caves too. But sorrow harm she'll do you, but great luck always follows the track of her traheens. There's them as would rather catch a sight of the Abbess Beavoin, than find the mark of a lepraghaun, aye, indeed faith."

O'Brien took leave of the old woman, but the vision of Shane, the lurking person in the Abbey ruins, the strange guide in the caves, and the Abbess Beavoin, occupied his thoughts, and gave a vein of wild and fantastic imagery to his sleeping dreams, which he could not wholly shake off when awake.

In a week from this adventure, O'Brien parted from the amiable confraternity, with a regret natural to the sensible, in parting even from inanimate objects, to which they have been habituated; but most natural in one alive, even

to the very quick, to kindness and to unkindness. He forgot their possible speculations on his moral independence, in their attention and hospitality. Whatever might have been their secret opinion of his waywardness, or their dislike of his principles, both religious and political, they had neither irritated him by dictation, disgusted him by interference, nor worried him by remonstrance; and they had expressed their admiration of his talents, and their friendly regret at not being destined to benefit still further by his society, in such mild and insinuating reproaches that they left him in higher favour with himself, and consequently more pleased with them, than he had sometimes been with persons of more importance, and with associations of more beneficial tendency to the great interests of mankind.

His uncle, to whom he had announced his intention of proceeding to his aunts, in the county of Galway, had received the intelligence with the indifference of one, whose feeling were alike under the benumbing influence of age, and of systematic dissimulation. For his grand nephew he had no personal regard; for his present vocation he had more contempt than indignation; and of his future adherence to a system of which he was himself the support, or the dupe, he had no doubt whatever. He looked on the hot-headed young man as a bird, who flutters and flies to a limited distance, at the end of a string. It is the peculiar quality

of zeal, united with mediocrity, to cling with a desperate pertinacity to the favourite idea, or a darling hope; and this modern St Dominick was as ready for a crusade, and as certain of its success, as he who pursued conversion even to the verge of extermination. He refused to receive his nephew's personal adieus on the night before his departure; but O'Brien had not then to learn that blood is no necessary tie, or that propinquity and kin are no bonds, where bigotry has once sown her prolific seeds of deep and bitter dissension.

The wanderer's travelling arrangements had been easily made. His wardrobe and books had been dispatched by a Galway carrier to St Grellan; and a Connemara pony (the camel of the Connaught desserts), presented to him by one of the brothers of the confraternity, afforded him the surest and pleasantest mode of passing through the mountainous wilds, to the coast scenery of Jar Connaught, and its little capital, St Grellan. The donor of this sure footed animal was one in whom O'Brien had taken much interest, and with whom he had much conversed. He was the young Franciscan preacher of Tuam, whose eloquence had brought such crowded congregations to the private chapel of the confraternity. He was far gone in a consumption, a circumstance that deepened the interest his character and manners had begotten. Though a true Irish friar, zealous and vehement, with a broad brogue and a loung-

ing gait, there was yet about him a certain indication of one, who felt deeply, and might have been loved — of one who had made evident sacrifices of natural passions, to some sense of duty; which, whether right or wrong in its principle, called forth the pity and admiration that such sacrifices ever exact.

O'Brien, in return for his pony, had given him a miniature, on copper, of his favourite saint, St Francis of Ancisa, which he found in his writing-box, and which he had bought for a very trifle in the Piazza Navona at Rome.

„We shall meet again," said O'Brien, in some emotion, and shaking him heartily by the hand.

„Yes!" said the young Franciscan, emphatically, and throwing up his eyes to the starry heavens, under whose canopy they were standing, „We shall meet again; if not in this world, in the next."

O'Brien had engaged his passage across Lough Corrib in a sail-boat; which was to start from a spot near the ruins of Cross Abbey, an old religious house, known also by the name of the Holy-rood, between Cong and the now improved, but then miserable village of Headford. The stars were still twinkling in the firmament, and the dawn was but faintly struggling through the mists of a grey and loaded atmosphere, as he turned the head of his „hobler" from the court of „the Retreat," and took the road to Cross. The day came heavily on,

drizzling and dreary; but as he proceeded, the weather, with all the uncertainty of the most uncertain climate in the world, suddenly changed — new objects cheered and charmed the loneliness of his way. It was the fair day of Galway, and the road soon became thronged, even at that early hour. From the mountains of Mayo, and the shores of Lough Corrib, and even from the rugged heights of Ben Leven and Mam Turk, in the wilds of Connemara, came groups of cadgers, with their panniered asses, bog-trotters, with their turf kishes, and old women, in their binogues and mantles, laden with Connemara stockings; while forms which nature seemed to have intended for other associates and other regions, were occasionally visible among the rustic population.

In whatever direction O'Brien looked, he met bright black eyes darting their arch, yet timid glances, which alternately sought and bent beneath his own: well-developped forms, thrown into such attitudes as the rural duties in which they were involved prescribed, were set off to advantage by a dress which (though of the rudest, coarsest texture) traditionally preserved the modes of better times, when the commercial wealth, which poured into the ports of Galway and Mayo, created an artificial prosperity, in the midst of turbulence and factious warfare. Petticoast of bright scarlet and crimson,*

---

* The dress of the women, who are handsome, and

set in full thick plaits round the waits, as in the time of Granuail (who probably improved the fashions of her subjects by her trip to the court of Elizabeth), were contrasted by the blue cloak, or mantle, thrown back from the shoulders, to display the brown boddice or jacket beneath. Glossy black, or golden hair, such as Ossian sang, and Carolan delighted to celebrate, was drawn becomingly off the open forehead, and fastened behind, by that modern representative of the old Irish bodkin, a stout, long, black pin; while dark brows and rich colouring frequently presented such heads as the traveller sees on the banks of the Tiber. Gazing on faces from which the bloom of youth and the blush of virgin modesty were not yet banished by rude labours and matronly indifference, O'Brien saw such traces of Spanish origin, as justified the supposition, that the western coast of Ireland was colonized, if not by the sons of Milesius, at least by his Iberian descendants.

The sun had risen in cloudless splendour, and threw a long line of quivering light upon the waters of Lough Corrib, the purple mists of the distant mountains rolled up from their bases, and jocund day stood tip-toe on their

---

have a good expression in their countenances, is peculiar; scarlet, crimson and purple, are their favourite colours. — *Walks through Ireland*, 1817.

summits. As the noble scene came forth to view, and expanded into beauty, the susceptible spirits of O'Brien sprang up with the breeze, which carried off upon its wing the vapours of the dawn, to that great receptacle of the elements, „the steep Atlantic." He drew up at the appointed place of embarkation, and was soon on board. The boat had already cleared the little creek, when a long, loud whistle, arrested the attention of the helmsman and crew, and a man running in full speed, with a kish or basket, pending from a long stick, that rested on his shoulder, appeared, hailing the crew, with many signs, both of hat and hand. The rowers rested on their oars, and the helmsman exclaimed.

„Och, its Corny the eadger, come for a cast over to the mountains, if your honor plazes; and troth, Sir, I'll engage, its himself will pay yez, with a good song; for he is the finest poet on the lake, any how."

„A poet," repeated O'Brien, laughing; „pray then put back and take him in, for the honour of the calling."

„Long life to your honour," said the helmsman, „sorrow a one but knows Cornelius O'Clummaghan from Shannon river to Innis Bofin."

„And some to their cost," muttered a poor, pale, half naked creature, scarcely able to wield the oar he held.

„He is fine company, and has great wit," said another; „though some take him for an innocent; and he was welcome from Menlo Castle, to the poorest cabin in Connemara, until he got into trouble, poor lad, some years ago; but now he has come back, and has taken up a taste, and is willing to put his hand to any thing in an honest way, betimes selling a basket of scollops, or a hank of Connemara stockings, betimes a few story books, ould ballads, holy pictures, and the like, and goes on errands through the country."

While this biographical eulogy was pronouncing, a corricle or canoe, constructed of twigs and hides, was sent ashore for the poet. The rowers meantime lay on their oars; and O'Brien, in throwing his eyes over the miscellaneous jumble of dead and live cargo, stowed into the little bark, was struck by the appearance of a scarcely human form, gathered up like a hedgehog, on the floor of the hold. A ragged mantle was drawn over the whole figure to the very head, which was bent upon the upraised knees. The deep inspirations of one who slept soundly, alone intimated that this shapeless mass was human.

„It is a poor wild cratur," said one of the rowers, following the direction of O'Brien's eyes, and poking at the „delicate monster" with his oar, as Trinculo does at Caliban. „He is getting a cast over, for the love of our lady of the holy rood."

O'Brien's attention was now drawn off by the arrival of the lake poet: he however had nothing poetical in his appearance, and resembled less in his person, than his calling, his lackadaisical fraternity of modern times. He was a low, squat, square, but athletic figure, with a countenance undecided in its expression, between cunning and idiotism; with a penthouse brow, leering mouth, and small twinkling eyes that almost met (one of nature's sure indications of a rogue). It was observed by old Barnaby Rich (a traveller in Ireland, in the days of James 1st), that „the people of that country were most bountiful to rhymers and fools" — and in either, or in both, of these capacities, Corny the cadger was most heartily received, by the helmsman and crew; for he who amuses is the welcome guest of all classes.

As soon as he had stowed himself and his ambulating library in the boat, he made a low obeisance to O'Brien, and then addressed him in a doggered rhyme, to a sort of whining chaunt:

„Glory be to your honor, both now and evermore;
Of health, wit, and wisdom, may God increase your store,
For myself being here, which makes my dràme come true,
Poor Cornalius is bound in duty to pray for you."

„And pray, friend," said O'Brien, „what was your dream?"

„I dramed your honor rowed me over, without fee or pay,
Then added a tester, to carry myself on my way."

The rowers laughed and winked.

„You seem to cap rhymes at will," said O'Brien; „have you any good old Irish poetry?"

„Plinty, your honour," was the reply.

„Have you Neilan the bard's famous invocation to Lord Thomas Fitzgerald, called the Silken Thomas?"

„No, plaze your honour, but I have Carolan's reysate for drinking." Another laugh from the rowers, and sly wink from the improvisatore.

„Have you never heard," continued O'Brien, „of Ossian's chase, and dialogue with Saint Patrick?"

„Is it Oisin? Och, I know him well, Sir: Oisin — Mac Fionne — Mac Cumhal — Mac Cormac — Mac —, och sure I could repate it all, when I was a child, upon my fingers' inds."

„What have you got in your basket, friend?" asked O'Brien.

Corny drew forth some dirty little books, and wetting his thumb, as he turned over one of the title-pages, detailed the contents and merits of each, with a genius for puffing that might have served the purpose of the first-rate London publishers. „Here's the surprising

History of the Life and Actions of Redmond O'Hanlon, or Emunh Ecnuch, protector of the rights and properties of his benefactors, and Captain General of the Irish tories, a most notorious, though a gentlemanlike robber. Here are, 'the Feats and Actions of Phaidrig Mac Tighe,' 'the miracles of St Patrick,' and 'The last Dying Speech of *Cahier na Gapul*, the renowned horse-stealer;' but may be, your honour would rather have the history of my books in poetry," and clearing his voice, he fell into a sort of piperly drone, and ran over his little catalogue in a rambling rhyming measure, — a faculty by no means rare in the poor scholar, or bog poet and pedagogue of Ireland.

«Here's larning and wisdom for all ranks and all ages,
For gassoons and scollogs, and genteels and sages.
Here's the seven wise maisters, Bellianis, of Greece,
Which myself prizes more than great Jason's gold fleece.
Here's holy St Bridget, more fair than Briomartes,
And pretty Mrs Flanders, *opus naturæ non artis;*
And here's our patron, Saint Patrick, whose glory was grate,
Who left us the whiskey, and forbid us the mate.
So long life to his honour; here's the finest of stories,
'Tis of Redmond O'Hanlon, the chief of all Tories.
Here's the feast of O'Rourke, and the fight of O'Maras,
And the battle of Aughrim, and the fall of O'Haras.

Here's *Cahier na Gapul*, and Manus M'Connell,
With his merry man Andrew, aud Randal O'Donnel,
With other great tories, Irish rogues, rapparees,
Once plenty in Ireland, as laves on the trees;
And here's miracles worked by ould father Casey,
Songs, cronans, and ballads, which cannot but plaze ye.
Here's the miners of Wicklow, the Calleen Dhas Dhu;
Here's Drimin Duh Deelish, and Bumper Squire Drew;
Here's the isles of Lough Corrib, like emeralds so green.
Forenent Tory Island, in the rear Isle Potsheen.
Here's sweet Gracy Nugent, and fair Bridget Cruise,
The Hunt of Kilruddery, and Petticoat loose;
The Hair in the corn, and Molly Astore;
With Planxties and cronans, and ballads guillore.
And what need I more, or with rigmarole taze yez,
For, if this doesn't plaze ye, the divil wont plaze yez."

„One must be indeed difficult," said O'Brien, laughing; „but which is Tory Island?"

„There it is, your honour, with its fine old ruin and weather-beaten trees, bending from the sea blast. Och hone! many a brave gentleman made a bould retrait there, in the troubles, and will again, plaze God;" and he turned his disagreeable eyes leeringly on O'Brien. „Och! there's life in a muscle, dead as he looks; and many a strange story runs the country in regard of that island: and is well known that neither baste nor bird, though many

bes in it, can bellow nor warble there, in regard of Abbot Goil's prayer. For this being an island of saints, and the noise of the birds and bastes and other four-footed quadrupeds disturbing the monks at their devotions, the Abbot prayed that the gift of tongues, voice, or whistle might never flourish in the island; and it's pity but part of his prayer was put up for the faymales, and then it's to Inish Goil the boys would be looking for wives."

„Inish Goil!" said O'Brien; „is Tory Island Inish Goil, of which I have heard so much?"

„'Tis, plaze your honour, in good Irish, and Abbot Goil's tomb lies there to this day."

The lake poet now deviated from the topography, to the biography of the country; and having by his wandering life, *les nouvelles à la main*, he dealt out his eulogies, or vituperations, on the neighbouring gentry according as they had administered to his wants or vanities, — as he had been feasted in the hall of an O'Cannor, or banished from the kitchen of an O'Kelly. Corny appeared to be, in fact, in this respect, no unfair specimen of the *genus irritabile* of a higher class; the *amour propre* of his calling apparently determining his inspirations, vindictiveness was his muse, and a cruishkeen of whiskey his butt of sack.

In listening with disgust to his scandalous chronicler, O'Brien mentally acknowledged the justice of those severe decrees of Elizabeth's

sanguinary code, which were directed against „certen idle men of lewd demeanour, called rhymers or poets, from whose intercourse with the great, no small enormities did grow." If his poetical patriotism, inbibed with his mother's milk, induced him to credit the influence ascribed to the bards of ancient times, as he read the poetry of Ossian, or listened to the music of Carolan, he could detect nothing in the poet of Lough Corrib, that savoured of „the sweet and good intention" attributed to the bards of the O'Neils and the Fitzgeralds. He saw in him, indeed, a coarse, but not inadequate representation of „the old Irish tale-teller," who amused his patrons, „when they were melancholy and could not sleep; and for a little reward or share of a stolen cow," praised or vituperated, with indiscriminate baseness. He soon, therefore, turned away with a feeling of antipathy excited by the rhymer's sinister and disagreeable countenance, and gave up his undivided attention to the wild and splendid scenery of Lough Corrib.

As he advanced, the lake appeared almost rounded by an amphitheatre of hills, broken into every abrupt disunion, which could give variety to form, and effect to light. The primitive mountains, with their high conical peaks, formed an aerial back-ground to the secondary range of hills; whose rugged declivities melted gradually into the rich tones of

the lowlands, which swept along the shore of the waters. He was already well acquainted with the aspect of the more elevated features of the Connemara mountains; and in paddling his corricle among the rocks and breakers of their rugged shores, he had often taken the mighty Ben Leven for his landmark; and had listened to the tales of the Clana Earla, as the fishermen pointed to the twelve pins of Benbola, or the fortress rock of Granuaile. But he had seen them as distant visions, fleeting and airy as the clouds through which they gleamed. He was now penetrating their mysterious bosoms; and was about to tread their tangled depths, in whose fastnesses his ancestors had pursued the O'Flaherties, and had been in their turn pursued by them to their sea-girt realms of Arran. He remembered when these hills were to him as Alps and Appenines: for „nothing is, but thinking makes it so;" and accurate ideas are the result only of slow, sure, but often too painful experience.

The bright, broad expanse of water, over which they had glided, was now gradually narrowing into a small creek, formed by a mountain stream; against whose winding current they had some difficulty to contend, till the shallowness of the water, and the inclosure of the rocks prevented further navigation. They landed in a shady little cove, at the base of the Glan mountain, which formed the mouth

of a precipitous glen. O'Brien drew from a purse, which still contained the greater part of the mysterious donation, enough to pay the crew, aud more than realize the dream of Corny the cadger; and the parties separated.

The boatmen of Lough Corrib and their plebeian passengers, were occupied for n few minutes in drawing their vessel to its harbour; and then moved onwards to a stream of blue smoke, which was curling gracefully in the sunshine. Though no human habitation was visible, the smoke, in a place so wild and solitary, was a beacon never to be mistaken. It was there the „fire burnt and cauldron bubbled," whose secret distillation, pure and bright as it dropped, contained in its essence the elements of rapine, perjury, and murder, — that bane of the morals as of the prosperity of the people; encouraged directly by the government; and indirectly by a religion, which forbids the wholesome nourishment the wretched Irish peasant is unable to obtain, and permits the use of a poison, the source of his crimes, and the cause of much of his poverty.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MOUNTAINS.

Jam undique sylvae et solitudo.
PLINII *Epist.*

MEANFIME O'Brien, under the guidance of a lad, who was lounging near the creek, ascended through the acclivities of Glan to a Shebean house, which, niched in a rock like an eagle's nest, exhibited in the turf and broom suspended over its door, an intimation that entertainment was to be had „for man and baste." The mountain traveller availed himself of the notice, fed his pony, and took such refreshment as the primitive inn of Connemara afforded. Broiled trout from the Lough, with oaten bread, „laughing potatoes," milk hot from the cow, with spirits warm from the still, and „faithful to its fires," and water, that looked in hue and brilliancy like dissolved diamonds, furnished forth no contemptible feast. To this excellent fare, was added much information concerning the journey the traveller was about to make. From one of the shelving acclivities of the Glan, which rose high and sharp behind the house, the host pointed out to him, with as much importance as if he had shown the stranger „all

the kingdoms of the earth," those unerring fingerposts of Nature's own elevation, the headlands and mountain peaks. The view was sublime; it spread before the eye, far as human vision could reach, marked and vivid, as on a richly coloured map. The mountains of Connemara were then savage and wild, as the absence of all cultivation could make them; unexplored and almost unknown, save to their own inhabitants, and to the smuggling carriers who traversed their lower range, from the coast to the inland countries. Vast tracts had been made over to new proprietors in the beginning of the century, who had as yet made but few efforts to examine or reclaim them; and they were inhabited only by scullogs or petty farmers, whose best crops were derived from their intercourse with the smugglers of the coast; or by herds and cottiers, hovelled in ravines, which gave a scanty herbage in winter to the lean flocks, that in summer were fed upon the dried-up loughs. The castles of residence or defence, raised in their sheltered valleys, or on the summits of the sea-beat headlands, by the factious Burkes, by the fierce O'Flaherties, and invading O'Briens of Arran, now lay in ruins; or if at all inhabited, it was only by the meadhain, or middlemen of some remote proprietor or distant absentee, unconscious of the resources of the soil he thus carelessly abandoned to his mercenary and ignorant re-

presentatives. The comparative civilization derived from the presence of chiefs, even so wild and warlike as those, who in earlier times claimed the mountains as their territories, had long yielded to the abandonment and neglect, which, from the epoch of the revolution, had fallen upon the most romantic districts, of the once most important and most interesting provinces in Ireland, All therefore was the stillness and solitude of the desert, but not its dreariness; for there was a bold breaking up of surface, an alternation of high shooting cliffs, and deep seated dells; of streams that issued in silver threads from their elevated sources, and congregated into foaming torrents as they fell into their channeled beds; of vast stools of old forest trees sending forth their scathed scraggy arms through the young green underwoods, that sprung from their roots; and of tracts of dreary moors and morasses, enlivened by those innumerable little lakes, so peculiar to Irish mountains, gleaming in the sunshine or curling in the blast; while troops of red deer looked down from the surrounding heights; and flocks of birds, startled from their aeries, ascended into the clouds!

Such were the natural accidents which gave life and movement to a scene, destitute of all human industry. While the mountain regions, viewed from the elevated spot where O'Brien stood, seemed to swell and fade into distant

acclivities, forming endless chains towards the north and west, the lowland plains, and narrow strip of rocky coast, to which this rude region formed so bold a back-ground, were spread beneath to the south. Misty and soft as they lay in the sunny mid-day lights, it was difficult to descry those landmarks which were pointed out and named by the experienced host; but the more remote headlands of Achille and Bencooler stood out, distinct and lofty above all, the watch-towers of the mightiest ocean of the universe, the land ramparts of the old world, and yet the nearest spot of earth to the new.

„And now," said the host, pointing out the bird's-eye view of O'Brien's journey, „you must cross the mountains, by the mam or glen between Glan mountain and the mountains of Lough Ambro; and then coming down on the Lakes of Ardcrow and Hindella, where you will go down the rapids with Emunh-na-Lung,* the ferryman; and still keeping the Leam mountain to the left or east, and the twelve pins to the west, you must go straight forward, down the bridle track, by the bed of the Suceb river, and you will arrive at once upon Jar Connaught; and afore night you will find yourself with Lough Glenmurrough to the left, the Bay of Rosemuck to the right, and

---

* „*Emunh na Lung*," Ned of the oar.

the town of St Grellan, down convanient forenent you."

O'Brien took down the wild names of this verbal itinerary in his tablets; and assured by his *cicerone* that he would never want a clean shakedown and a „*caed mille faltha*," while there was a thatched roof in Connemara, he mounted his pony, and began to take his solitary way.

He gazed on all around with enthusiastic emotion. National vanity and early associations influenced his picturesque perceptions, which in themselves were strong and clear. Excited by the scene, by the rapid circulation of his blood, and by the rarified air he breathed, full of those spirits which engender hope and kindle fancy, his temperament responded to his position; and impressions were received, and ideas combined, such as he had never before experienced. But while new and astounding views of nature, gave new and imposing images to a mind the most creative and imaginative, still they excited sensations rather than sentiments. Confused, exalted, almost inebriated, he felt equal to any enterprize, and capable of any sacrifice, which had for its object that country, so strongly illustrated by the beautiful (but desolate and neglected) scenery around him. With his mind, like his steps, wandering, from point to point, and from thought to thought, he wondered that

in regions so sublime, the Irish heart ever quailed, the Irish spirit ever drooped; and that men, who were masters of such natural ramparts, had not rather died in their defiles, than have submitted to the oppressor. „But, alas!" he added in soliloquy, „minds, not mountains, are the true ramparts of liberty."

Thus pre-occupied, he passed unwittingly from one steep to another (his mountain pony almost directing his march), like one who dreams and walks, where waking consciousness would shudder to tread; till reaching an elevated cliff, which, by stopping the pony, awakened him to self-possession, he smiled at the recklessness of his own enthusiasm. The defile, unmarked by any track, appeared to lead only to a precipitous fall of rocks; and the sure-footed animal with instinctive caution, stood still.

O'Brien, in utter forgetfulness of the instructions of his host, and perplexed as he was, was yet free from the slightest suspicion of personal danger. He knew that in Ireland, the more remote the track of civilization, the safer is the way. There, crime, arising out of political misrule, is only directed against political oppression: and though at that period, numerous bands of peasantry had in the south armed themselves, and were in open rebellion against the greatest of all Irish grievances, the tithes, yet in Connaught, where the wretch-

ed natives, in the early part of the century, had been „brayed as in a mortar," all was the peace of spiritless resignation,—the calm which broods upon the ruin of the tempest that has passed.

O'Brien, thus puzzled as to the course he should pursue, sat patting the back of his pony, when he thought he heard a rustling in the mimic forest of brushwood, quickbeam, and witch-hazle, which richly covered the sides of the rocks, to the left of the defile, from the summit to the base. Throwing up his eyes, he fancied he saw a figure moving through the masses of brambles and verdure; but at that moment his attention was drawn off. A horseman suddenly bounded across his narrow pathway, endeavouring to rein in his steed, and „humbly axing pardon of the gentleman for startling his animal." It was Corny the cadger; he appeared to have issued, with a sort of pantomimic effect, from a fissure in a high, black, dripping rock, which rose perpendicularly to the left of the pass; but the furze and underwood he had cleared away, by springing his horse boldly through them, had concealed the mouth of the defile, which appeared to open in a bridle-way, or short cut from the shore of the lake below. He was mounted on a stout garron, between two paniers; and accounted for his appearance, by saying, that he had been dispatched in great haste by a dealer

in fish below, on the lake, across the mountains to Killery Bay, where a great glut of turbot had been caught. His employer, he said, served the religious gentlemen of Cong and Tuam; and the two next days were black fasts. He then offered his services to the traveller as far as their way lay in the same direction, with a simple earnestness, that almost obliterated the disagreeable impression made by his sinister countenance. He remarked that, instead of proceeding forward, „his honour must turn back a taste, and take the little *luib* * to the left, which would bring him to a bridle track to the head of Lough Ardcrow."

O'Brien gladly availed himself of this information, though somewhat startled by the cadger's appearance; and Corny continued:

„Och, sorrow step of ground from the foot of Mam Turk to the top of Ben Leven, but I know better nor my pater or credo. Jasus pardon me" (crossing himself devoutly), „and dioul would be in me, if I did not: for many a sore step I have made in 'em, as scholar, cadger, and cosherer."

„Are you a Connemara man?" asked O'Brien, with a scrutinizing look; for, though glad to be guided, he still did not like his guide.

„I am not, plaze your honour, but am all as one; having served 'Squire Joyce, of Joyce's

* A glen.

country, for two years and more, and carried the post, and had my bit, and my sup, and my rag, in regard of a trifle of a good turn I did the 'Squire, when he was high sheriff."

„What was that?" demanded Murrogh carelessly.

„Why I was walking the world, in them times, as a poor scholar, with my satchel and copies (for larning was then in fashion, not all as one as since them schools were set up); and hearing that the Galway bailiffs were on the hunt for the high sheriff, in respect of a trifle of debt to a Galway marchant for limins and sugar (all the daling, troth, ever he had with any of them; his estate finding every thing, barring the claret, which comes from his cousin-germain in Bourdeaux), what does myself do, but helps them to a boat to cross the lake in, taking care to let out the bottom, when they were little more than half way; and being then a light bit of a gassoon, and swimming like a barnacle, it was not long till I got safe to 'Squire Joyce's in good time to put the high sheriff on his diffince; and when all the constables in the country came down upon him in a posse, myself carried his honour over to the Hy Tartagh or O'Flaherty's Mountains, and lodged him safe in the ould ruins of the Abbey, till the hue and cry was over; and then brought him back in great state to his own place, and had the run of the house ever after; and might

to this day, only for a little trouble I fell into (and was a wronged man, and an innocent, if ever there was one), in respect to a taste of smuggling." Here Corny sighed out an „Och hone!" „So, after that, when I came back from foreign parts, I took to cadgering, and crosses these mountains with a bit of fish, or a kish of kelp, or whatever is going, ten times a year, and more; and sells a print of a priest, or a story-book or ballad to the fishermen; — any thing to get honest bread. But minds ever to keep the bridle ways and high roads, and goes straight from Balinrobe to Cong, and from Cong across the Lough, down upon St Grellan town, or the Killeries; in respect of my accident, Jasus be good to us. Amen."

„And what was your accident?" asked O'Brien, more in courtesy than in curiosity.

„Och! plaze your honour, I don't like to be discoursing about it. This a-way, if you plaze, Sir, dear, to the left But its what I was never rightly myself after that, any how, though it's now fourteen years agone; and it's far I have been, and much I have seen since then; and the like of that, at home or abroad, never came across me afore or since."

„And pray what was it, friend?" asked O'Brien, whose curiosity now was worked upon by this „swelling prologue of a mighty theme," which the cadger was evidently more anxious to relate, than he was to hear.

„What was it, Sir, dear? Och, then to your left again, if you plaze. This Mam has the divil's own twists in it; but once we track the neck of the mountain above, we'll see the whole bog and Turlogh of Ardcrow, like a sheet of paper before us. What was it, your honour? Och, then it's a long story, and to this day sorrow night's lodging need I want, nor bit nor sup neither, as long as I'd be willing to tell the cottiers, aye troth, and the best scollogs in Connemara, and was called into Miss Joyce's parlour to tell that same. And ould Mr Martin, of Dangan, God bless him, when I'd bring a kish of fish to the gates, it's what he'd have me into Madam Martin's iligant room, and, Corney, he'd say, it's a long time since we'd have your story of the Abbey of Moycullen and the ghost of Abbess Beavoin O'Flaherty."

At the mention of these names, O'Brien listened with an awakened interest, and increased curiosity; and Corney went on in his rambling manner.

„And so, then, I'd scrape my best bow, and stand with my caubeen in my hand, forenent the buffet, and every servant in the house with his head in at the door, and the quality sated on the setee; I'd clear my voice, and—you may throw your reins on the baste's neck, your honour, and let her take her own way up the hill, for she'll never decaive you — I'd clear my voice, and just humouring it awhile, till

I'd get into a proper tune, I'd begin this way. In the name of God, and the blessed Virgin, and the whole court of heaven, amen. It came to pass on the eve of the pattern of the feast of Saint Grellan, glory be to his honour, that I, Cornelius O'Clummaghan, scholar, cadger, and cosherer, commonly called the poet of Loch Corrib, having loaded my garron and kishes down below, among the caves of Killery Bay, and being bound to Balinrobe on a trifle of business for a frind, as often I was, and will again, plaze God, began my journey through the mountains of Connemara, fresh and fasting, with the wind full in my teeth, and a say fog full in my back, my bit of a dudeen * stuck in the cord of my caubeen, ** with a slip of sally in one hand, and my padreens in the other. Now every one knows, that the short cut from Killery harbour to Balinrobe, is by the pass of Barnaderig, and through Joyce's country to the ferry of Cuffeen, at Loch Mask, which brings you down to Balinrobe town, in no time; but having a raison of my own, for uot going th'ould bridle track, which is well known to man and baste, I took my way by the skirts of Lough Feo, striking into the heart's core of the Kylemore hills, and keeping my eye on the twelve pins of Benbola, by way of a mile-post, never losing sight of the track

---

* Short pipe. ** Hat.

of Benknock, until I cleared the hills of Shannonayola, and found myself late and lone, in the great pass of Mamclogheleer, as myself thought; for now yez will mind, I lost sight of the twelve pins, and took the sun as my guide, it going due-west, and I going due-east; and thought I couldn't miss my way, barring the night came on, nor then itself, in regard of the stars, and so walking on aisy and quiet beside the garron, she being heavily laden, and I beguiling the way as I could, betimes lighting my pipe from a smothered sod, that I stuck in one of the kishes, betimes taking a thimbleful out of my cruishkeen, which was belted with a suggan at my side—betimes dropping a bead, and saying an ave or decade,—and betimes lilting up an ould planxty, or repating a taste of Don Belianis, or the seven wise maisters, or any skreed of larning, that turned up in my mynd; when what should I hear, as I thought, but voices talking English among the rocks, on the top of me, which was remarkable; little English being then talked in Connemara, any how; but couldn't see a christian, barring a great goss hawk, that came screaming down the cliffs, and then cutting along the *rasach*,* was soon out of sight. A bad sign it was! and it wasn't for nothing the bird quit her nest; and the next minute,

* A wild place.

what should I hear, Sir, honey, but the shot of a musket, and then another, and then a shout faint and far, like the howl of a hound at midnight, and then a great rustling and floustering among the atharwood * above, and then a floundering and a flapping down the cliffs, from rock to raith, ** and then comes tumbling the carcase of a man, just like a wounded curlew, till all battered and bloody, he lies staked on the point of a crag, as close to myself, as yez are now, gintleman dear, at this present moment. Diabhal! I thought the sowl would have left the body of me; the more so, as the head of the corpse being turned to me, and the eyes of it staring out of the socket, in my face, what should I see, but th'ugly countenance of a great crony and cosherer of my own, one Darby Lynch of the Cladagh, who had been hunted in the mountains two days before, by them boddaghs of Revenues, who had been sent down to bring ruin upon the place, all in respect of a taste of tay, and a trifle of tobacco, that Darby, poor boy, forgot to inter in the port, and to save trouble, had landed them down among the roeks in the caves of Killery Bay. Och troth, then I saw it was time for myself to be

---

* "Atharwood," an old Irish term for hawthorn, quickbeam, birch, witch-hazle; such as usually grow in mountains, ravines, and wild places.

** Brake.

on the *scuirlang;* * and without waiting, to raise the *keenthecaun* ** over the dead man, I cuts the cable of my kishes, and jumping the garron, dashes down a bit of rasagh or shrubbery glen, and on I went over stone and stream, thinking of nothing at all, but how to get rid of them boddaghs of Revenues, who brought me into trouble afore; and seeing at last that I had missed my mark, and was on th'ould channel of a torrent, that had taken it into its head to go another way, just for variety (which often it does), I turns the garron up the first bit of a *luib* that I met, and short and sweet it was, like the road to sin; for all of a sudden it opened into a sort of a *bainseoch* of a place, without track or trace, mark or mearn, but overgrown with *loso wood*, *** so that the garron couldn't make a step, without tearing through bosheens of fern and furze, ivy and thorn bush, the soul! and looking up at the sun, it was then myself first seed that we were taking the same road, cheek by jowl,

---

* On the move.

** A corruption from the word *caoinan*, or Irish dirge, still howled at funerals in most parts of Ireland. Although there is not in the Irish language, the professional Caoinans are called Keeners. Each province had formerly its own *ullaloo*, called the Munster cry, or Ulster cry, etc. etc. etc. and may still have.

*** Creeping plants.

and that instead of getting on, it was backward I was going, as the devil tells his padrheens, god bless us! but what had I for it? sorrow thing! so I takes the first turn, which led to a glin or pass properly so called, and the way was broad below, the rocks were meeting and hugging above the head of me, like gossips at a fair, so that what light was in it, came in at the far ind, at which myself wint out, as soon as I convainently could; and if I did, where should I find myself, but in a four ways place, at the top of Glan Murrogh, and within sight of th'ould haunted ruins of the Abbey of Moycullen; and then troth you would not give an Englishman's button, or what's less, an Irishman's skewer, for my life; for now mind me well, Sir, dear, what should I see, standing bolt upright against a rock afore me, lone and lofty, grand and grey, but a fine ancient ould stone crass, and the crass in a circle; and down the main trunk, the figure of a nun with her hands on her breast, cut out of the hard stone; and above her head, cut in the same, these words in the finest of Latin (yez understand Latin, Sir, dear), „*Orate pro me, Beavoin O'Flaherty,*" and a little green rath, as green as ever grew on fairy ground, rising near; and a torrent which, in regard of the rath, is called Pool na Fouika, * dashing

---

* The fairy's waterfall.

down from a tall comely cliff behind all; and it was then to my moan. I well guessed the place, it was my sore luck to stand in!" Here Corny paused, and taking off his hat, wiped his moist forehead with the sleeve of his coat.

„And what place was it?" asked O'Brien anxiously.

„Why what place could it be? Wasn't there the four ways! and the Abbess Beavoin's crass, and the Pool na Fouika, and the rath; and put that and that together, and what place could it be, but *Croisneer ny Croise*, * that often I heard tell of, and never wished to see."

„Well?" ejaculated Murrogh interrogatively.

„Well, no, but ill, your honour, and the worst of luck that ever befel me, for if there is a *bainseoch* ** on the face of the creation, it's that same, Go Dein Deudh — That it was in the stocks of Creag Grellan, I was standing that minute, or up to my neck in Lough Feo, in place of where I was. So putting myself under the purtection of God, and the whole court of Heaven, for what else had I for it, I dropt on my kness before the crass, to pray for the sowl of Beavoin O'Flaherty, as it was my duty and devotion to do, taking a drop of the cruiskeen just to raise the heart of me, which was sick and faint; but what would you

---

* The barrier of the cross.
** A desert place.

have of it, sorrow prayer, I could pray no more than if I was a Turk, or a heathen, or heretick — I that served mass, and could do it again with any boy within the verge of Mitre land. Och hone! it was then I gave myself up for a lost man, a desolate christian, a raal *Baintrebbah;* * and flopping down upon my two bare knees, and thinking of nothing at that present time, better to do, I begins to thump my breast, as if I was saying my 'culpa mea,' and fixed my eyes on the crass, and rehearsed aloud 'Orate pro me Evelyn O'Flaherty,' which was all I could do, for the sowl of me; and if I did, what should make response close at my ear, crying 'Amen,' but a voice, if voice I may call it, that was like the moan of the Banshee in a stormy night, faint and fearful. And I, starting on the feet of me, not maning to do that neither, only couldn't help myself; and saw as plain as this twig in my fist, standing in the woody pass forenent me, the figure of a faymale nun, the very moral of the stone image on the crass. Och! then I pledge you my conscience, its little I saw or heard after that, any way; for the sight lift my eyes intirely, and there came a roaring in my head you might have heard from this to Mam Turk; and what happened then, or what as wonge with me, body and sowl, or where I was, or what I was, it's what I never could tell, to

* An excommunicated person.

this blessed minute; but believes it's many a mile I travelled between that and day. And when I opened my eyes, one fine morning, I found myself lying as flat as a bannock on the bare soil, at the foot of the rock, with the sun shining over me, and a tall, swarthy woman standing beside me, in her smock and mantle; her long grey coolun hanging down, after the fashion of the isles of Arran, and a leather girdle round her middle, and looking, as I thought, very like a seal. * This was more of the yarn; for I knew *her* any how to be neither worse nor better than a *Binied.*

„'What call have ye here, ye *Aruh hallagh?* says she; which, in hard Irish, manes, 'ye divil's bit.'

„'Sorrow call, at all at all, Maram,' says I, 'and it wasn't with my own good will I came in it.'

„'Up, and away then, you *gramog*,' says she, 'and the divil your master be your speed, for this is holy ground, not made for his imps to sport in.'

„Sport, thinks I to myself; but I said nothing, only scrambled upon my feet, and made her a genteel bow.

„There,' says the Binied, pointing to the

* There is a popular superstition along the coast of Connemara, that the islands of Clare and Arran were at one period peopled by a race half seal, half human, or as they called them, mermen.

garron, that was taking her morning male of a whisp of grass, 'there's the garron; use her, while you have her, which won't be long; for Feadhree's curse is upon him and his rider!'

„And so, troth, I wanted no more bidding, but mounting my garron, turned her head to the spine of the mountain; but the Binied making a snatch at the suggan that bridled him, twists him round another way.

„'That's your road,' says she, 'for it leads to the gallows of St Grellan, to which you are bound, and that's my prophecy,' says she, 'and mind the words of the Banfhaoh;' and then giving the garron a skelp of a long *cipin* she held in her fist, off it went, as if the divil was her speed, sure enough, over stick and stone, hill and turlogh, till she landed me safe at the foot of gibbet hill.

„And now, young gintleman, jewel, yez will little marvel, if the people would rather be after taking a round of fifty cantreds of bog land than make a short cut by the pass of Croisneerny Croise, for it's a marked place; and luck or grace never fell on him yet, that left the track of his foot in it; as I know to my great moan and grief, in regard of my kishes, which was the ruination of me intirely, God help me! to say nothing of my lovely fine garron, which died of the crupple, two days after I got back, as the Binied foretold!"

„But how had you roused the wrath of the Binied?" asked his auditor insensibly interested in a detail so improbable, yet so much in keeping with the superstitious reminiscences of his early childhood.

„Och! then, an ould grudge to me and mine. For, do you see, my father had a hand in bringing Mor-ny-Brien's husband (for that was her name) to the gallows, a great rapparee and a wood hunter.

„Mor-ny-Brien!" repeated her foster-son, endeavouring to suppress his emotion, as he observed the eye of Corny glancing at him under its penthouse lid. „Was she the person you met in the mountains of the Hy Tartagh?"

„Ay, in troth, Sir; a great follower of the O'Briens of Arran, and mother of that imp of the divil and fairy-begotten garlagh, Shane-na-Brien, who was hanged for murdering a pace officer at Michael's Cross, twelve years ago."

At that moment a loud shrill blast from a rude mountain horn, repeated in endless echoes, came so close on the ears of the narrator, that it seemed to issue from the rocks, near which they were riding. O'Brien's pony stood still as if spell-bound, but the cadger's horse became so unruly, that he was unable to rein it. He was, indeed, as much incapacitated for the effort, by the sudden change which came over

himself, as by the fear of the animal he rode. His hands trembled, a ghastly paleness overspread his countenance; his eyes, strained from their sockets, were fixed upon some object on the rocks above, which fastened them with a basilisk's gaze; and his quivering lips vainly endeavoured to mutter some incoherent prayer, when a second blast released his horse from all restraint. Dashing forward with ungovernable violence, the animal soon carried him through the windings of the ravine, till he was lost to O'Brien's view. The mountain pony, on the contrary, remained quietly on the spot, as if the fearful blast, which scared away „the horse and his rider," was recognized as a familiar sound. She neighed and pricked up her ears, and pawed the earth, as in reply to a signal not unknown to her. Meantime O'Brien's eyes were intently fixed upon the spot, where the apparition stood, which had frightened the astounded cadger, and in which O'Brien distinctly recognized the figure of Shane-na-Brien. His gigantic form cutting darkly against the yellow sky, he stood leaning on his *galb* or staff, and looked like the very genius of the wild and solitary place, with the picturesque savagery of which his form so well assorted.

But while O'Brien gazed and hailed him, Shane drew back into the thicket, and the cry of „*faere ghim! faere ghim!*" notified that

caution was necessary and protection at hand. The wild and warlike cry was followed by the low and modulated tones of the Irish bugle or cornet, which softened down to a plaintive melancholy, as they descended the mountain. To his amazement O'Brien perceived that his intelligent pony followed the music till it ceased; when he found himself at the foot of the mountain, and within view of the smoke of a human habitation.

He was now convinced that Shane was accompanying him on his journey; and that he was the unaccommodated individual who had lain mantled in the bottom of the boat. In the horn, whose tones were so skilfully modulated, he recognized an instrument on which Shane had taught him to perform in his childhood. It was the cornet, or as it is called in Irish, the „musical stick;"* and the soft, wild music which was produced from it, was an air still known to the peasantry of Connaught, by the name of the „gathering of the kine, „whose rich, flowing, and somewhat melancholy melody, chaunted at eve by some female voice from a distant style, draws the obedient cattle home by the spell of its magic sounds. The docile instincts of the acute little animal,

---

* The cornac, or musical stick, is the horn of some animal, with a brass mouth-piece; and is still used.

whose properties were so well adapted to the region in which it was bred, struck him with admiration; and justified all he had heard of the once celebrated race of Connemara „hobblers." While caressing the pony with his hand and voice, as it stood to take breath after its arduous descent, he smiled as the notion crossed him, that the animal was a true Jesuit, and worthy, by its docility and intelligence, of the *manège* from which he had taken it.

While permitting his horse to drink from a spring which gushed from a rock, the lowest of the mass, O'Brien was struck with the wildness of the scene around him. It was a *turlogh*, or dried-up moss, encompassed by the steep hills that lie at the base of the Shannonfala mountains, and stretched between them to the very verge of the Loughs Hindilla and Ardcrow. Between these masses of water darted down one of those rapids, described by the host of the Shebean; but O'Brien looked in vain for Emunh na Lung, the ferryman; and found no mode of crossing, save in a corricle laid up under a witch-hazle that dipped into the water.

While standing in some perplexity, his ear was suddenly struck by a deep, low, and sobbing moan, that seemed to issue from a ravine that lay to the left of the rocks through which he had descended; and on approaching the spot,

he perceived an infant laid out upon a plank, just within the fracture of the mountains, leading to a little dell, which some wretched beings had apparently chosen for their last asylum, wherein to starve and die. Some loose stones and sods, heaped rudely together, against the side of a rough, but sheltering rock, intimated a human dwelling; and a little stream of turbid smoke issuing from an aperture in the green roof, spoke it to be then actually inhabited. The appalling image awed, but by no means checked, the warm, prompt, and sympathising feelings of the solitary spectator. He dropt a piece of silver into the broken trencher, which was placed at the feet of the infant corpse, for the purpose of receiving the contribution of the wanderer, who might pass by a place so lonely and isolated. Familiar as O'Brien had been with such objects in his early youth, and well acquainted with the barbarous Irish custom of exposing the dead, for the purpose of obtaining means of interment; still influenced perhaps by feelings predisposed to sadness, he shuddered at the spectacle, and was again backing his pony into the main path, when it struck him that this might be the hut of Emunh na Lung. At this moment the thick fall of many feet arrested his attention; a group of squalid, naked children, crowded to the door of the hut, followed by a tall, gaunt, spectral figure, who paused upon its threshold, and looked the very

genius of faminie. It was evident, that this Irish Ugolino was the wretched father of these wretched children; one of whom, with its shoulders drawn up to its ears, its bristled hair standing on end, with all the traces of neglect and want marked on its pinched features and squalid looks, came slyly, and yet joyfully forward, to snatch the silver shilling, which glittered in the trencher: and then holding it up to the man, screamed „*tighim, tighim*" (see, see). The father snatched the money, looked earnestly at it, then glancing his dark and sunken eye at the young and charitable stranger, he nodded his thanks, sullenly and dejectedly, but without making any further appeal to the benevolence he had awakened. O'Brien was deeply affected; he feared to advance — yet his feelings would not suffer him to retreat, without some effort to inquire into, and relieve such misery.

„Is there a fever in your house?" he demanded doubtingly, while occupied in untying the knotted strings of his purse.

„No faver," replied the man, doggedly.

„What did that child die of?" asked O'Brien, pointing to the livid little corpse, which looked the victim of typhus.

„Hunger," said the man, sternly.

O'Brien shuddered. „And that moan?" he asked, with some difficulty of articulation.

„'Tis the woman"

„The woman! your wife?“ Another sullen nod of the head was the distinct answer. The highest order of despair is but little demonstrative.

„What is the matter with her?“ The man hesitated a reply, either from want of English or of power to express himself; at last he said—

„Have you Irish?“

„Enough to understand you,“ replied O'Brien in the same language. The man pushed back the crouching children, with the humour and petulance of famished misery, and stepping up to O'Brien, told his story in the fewest possible words, and in that language, whose concise idiom gives emphais to whatever it conveys. He had been a petty farmer down in the low lands: he was reduced to become a cottier, a turf cutter: marshy bogs and scanty maintenance had brought down disease upon himself and his family. He became a pauper, without strength, and with too large a family to „walk the world“ (the Irish pauper's usual resource). He raised, therefore, a hut, and constructed a buirling on the edge of Lough Ardcrow; but the service of the ferry was inadequate to support his family, which was starving around him. His wife had lately lain in, the infant had died for want of its natural nourishment, and the mother was fast following it to its untimely grave: „that was all,“ he said, taking up the oar of his little boat to prepare for his office.

„All!“ said O'Brien, dismounting and articulating with great difficulty. One of the children took his bridle, and he entered the cabin, scarcely conscious that he did so: for his heart was full, and his recollection not very perfect. The house was, as might be expected, destitute of all human accommodation. A bundle of furze smoked under an aperture in one corner; a dying woman, squalid and meagre, lay extended on a bed of heather in another, covered only by a torn blanket. The livid tints of dissolution already discoloured her face: she was evidently running down fast, and each moan was less audible than the last. A difficulty of breathing, a something that rose hysterically to the throat, and prevented utterance, for a moment kept O'Brien silent. At last he said, addressing the man, who stood with his hands folded, his lips compressed, as one made up to suffering.

„Have you nothing to give her?“

„Nothing!“ was the emphatic reply, uttered in a tone of reckless, but almost placid despondency.

„Gracious God! what is to be done? A little nourishment might yet save her. Is there no cabin, no farm house within reach, where we could purchase her a little milk, till something better is procured?“

„There is,“ was the cool reply.

„Where?“ said Murrogh, eagerly, and

hastening to mount his horse. „Direct me where to find it, and I will go myself."

„Will you?" said the man, falteringly, and following him to the threshold, „will you?" As he spoke, his rigid muscles relaxing from their stern compression, every strong line and lineament of his haggard face yielding to the sudden impulse of long uncalled-on feelings, he „wept Irish." That deep, convulsive sob, which the high wrought sensibility of the most sensibly organized people in the world, sends out from their labouring breast, now burst tumultuously from the quivering lips of one, in whose chilled, but still all human heart, neither want, contumely, nor despair, had been able to dry those fine sources of emotion, so falsely attributed to the civilized and the refined alone.

In a moment O'Brien was mounted. The eldest of the children was placed before him as his guide; the little animal they rode, picking his steps along the ridge of a gullet, perilous to tread and fearful to look at. In ten minutes it brought them into the slovenly bawn of a mountain scullog's cabin, which lay sheltered in a little slip of valley, near Lough Hindilla, surrounded by all those symptoms of thriftless and negligent prosperity, which distinguishes the farming smuggler of Connemara. The baying of a cur dog brought an old woman from the cabin. O'Brien told his

story in three words; he wanted milk for a poor herd's wife in the mountains, who was dying for want of nourishment; and he held up a half-crown-piece as a running commentary on his brief text. The woman readily filled a bottle with milk, warm from the cow, and added to it a small wheaten cake. While taking ample payment for all, she was beginning a string of gossiping questions in Irish-English, prologued by the remark of how impossible it was to feed the poor cottiers of the mountains for ever, — when O'Brien cut her short, by giving the spur to his pony; and with a haste incredible, retracing the perilous path he came, he returned to the objects of his commiseration. The eagerness with which the poor woman bit the vessel that conveyed the nutrition, for which she was perishing, was more than a recompense for the service his charity had bestowed: while his feelings were still further taxed by the prostration of the unfortunate father at his feet.

In a few minutes, he was with his pony in the boat, and Emunh na Lung, standing erect, and governing with one oar the progress of the vessel, he made a rapid descent into the adjoining lake. O'Brien landed, and remounted; and he did not refuse his hand to the wild Connaught ferryman, who pressed it to his eyes and lips. Under the protection of a heartfelt blessing, he proceeded on his journey.

Pausing for a moment, to look back at the wild scenery he had passed, another winding blast from Shane's bugle seemed to bid him adieu, as he now entered the lines of comparative civilization. The sun, as it reddened the vast bosom of the Atlantic, danced on some remote spire that sparkled like a meteor in mid air: and the bridle track, which led to the beautiful coast, that lay in the distance, taking a turn, he soon came on the high road to St Grellan. There again he paused for a moment: all the associations of early life, all the feelings of that patriotism, which is so much made up of localities, came out in full development. He saw the dark mass of building in the midst of a dreary plain, which he identified as Bog Moy House, his future residence. He saw the young plantations and rich woods of Beauregard (the long uninhabited, but magnificent seat of the Proudforts), which lay on the road from St Grellan to Galway. He saw the glittering sashes of the Bishop's palace, at a short distance from the town, and the heavy atmosphere of turf smoke, which hung over the town itself. Agitated by many feelings of „good and ill together," he struck into the rutted way, which was by courtesy called the high road; and as the last gleam of sun faded from the bay, entered the suburb, which was still called O'Brien's gate.

At a period, when the largest cities of the

Irish provinces presented images of the desolation and violence, which, down to the close of the last century, marked the general character of the country, the smaller towns consisted of little more than one or two good modern houses (the residences of the church and state authorities), a jail, a barrack, and a surrounding cluster of the vilest cribs, raised of dry stones, — with a few old houses, antique towers, and perhaps a battered castle, or a ruined convent.

O'Brien having passed the gate which bore his name, and which still had the old inscription upon it — „From the ferocious O'Flahertys, deliver us, oh Lord!" and having waded through the long, dirty suburbs of mud hovels, called the Cladagh, the first object which struck his eye was the ruin of the old Nunnery of Mary, John, and Joseph, converted into a barrack; where an English regiment was mustered for evening parade, in its cloistered court. The contrast with the scenes, through which he had so recently passed, was striking; nor was he more prepared for the transmutation which, in traversing the main street of the town, he thought it had undergone since last he had seen it. Either his inexperience had formerly endowed it with a beauty and importance, which in fact it did not possess, or it was now much decayed and deteriorated: for it appeared to him mean, old, filthy, and wholly with-

out police. The trade of this second city of the country was indicated by an oaten cake, thrust out of a sashless window, on a deal board, or a pole struck in the thatch of a cabin, with a turf at the end of it; while „good dry lodgings" was scrawled over the door of many a hovel, whose threshold was washed by the overflowings of the unchannelled street; which ran in muddy torrents, as the acquired inequalities of the pavement directed. In other places, „entertainment for man and baste," indicated that whiskey and straw might be had for a moderate remuneration, by the equestrian, who was not able to „pay the dommage" of the great inn.

The great inn (itself a most dilapidated building, and once the town mansion of the O'Flahertys), was distinguished by a shattered sign of the O'Flaherty Arms, which lay against the door-case of the squalid entry; the walls, from which it had swung for half a century, being too frail to support any longer with safety so cumbrous an appendage. The long main street and market-place were peopled with a barefooted, ragged population; among whom a few officers, looking like beings of a superior creation, picked their way to the parade, at the summons of a drum, whose roll alone disturbed the silence of this nest of ruin and wretchedness.

O'Brien hesitated whether he should, or

should not, put up at the O'Flaherty Arms; for both himself and his steed were weary, after a voyage and journey of eighteen hours. A house of entertainment, however, on the opposite side of the way, by its appearance determined him to pass the night at St Grellan, and to proceed to Bog Moy, a distance of five miles, on the following morning. It was a spacious and handsomely fronted fabric, newly built, and with some of its windows not yet glazed. Over the door was written, „The Tontine Hotel;" and on a flaring escutcheon appeared the splendidly emblazoned arms of the Proudforts, upon a field or the pearl of Lough Corrib, with the motto of „*Qui me cherche, me trouve.*" O'Brien read, and sighed.

On dismounting, he was received, if reception it could be called, by a ragged, tipsey waiter, who lounged at the door; and who tottered before him into a large, chill, and comfortless room, with furniture as old and battered, as the walls were fresh and new.

„I should be glad to have a supper and well-aired bed-room immediately," said O'Brien.

„A supper and well-aired bed-room," repeated the waiter, carelessly, as he arranged the pepper, mustard, and vinegar cruets that stood on a old sideboard.

„Yes," said O'Brien, „I suppose there is no difficulty?"

„Difficulty; 'pon my credit I can't say."

„Send your master," said O'Brien.

„My master," said the man, surveying the traveller, who had come in a Connemara pony with only a light valise strapped behind him; „my master dines with the other revenue gentlemen at the collector's and isn't at home."

„Well then, send your mistress."

„The mistress! Och! the mistress never attinds customer's if she's in it; but she isn't She and Miss Maria Theresa are gone to a dry drum, and won't be home *the* Lord knows whin. It's my intire opinion," he added, putting his hands in his waistcoat-pockets, crossing his legs, and leaning back against the sideboard, „that the O'Flaherty Arms would have answered ye better, than the Tontine; for none stops here but the highest of quality."

„It is my opinion, too," said O'Brien, laughing in spite of himself, at this specimen of the Irish mode of doing business, and of getting up crack inns under the patronage of the autocrats of the land; and, hurrying out, he bade the boy who had charge of his pony, to follow him to the other inn. There, in spite of its appearance, he found a hearty welcome, a good bed-room (if not a particularly neat one), and a bill of fare consisting of the usual „boiled fowl, bacon, and greens," which never fail at a genuine Irish inn: where the bacon lies on the hob ready to be cut, and the fowl in the roost over it ready to be killed.

Before he partook of the fare, for which his mountain journey had so well prepared him, and which, as usual, required the preparatory operations of „first catching the fowl," and then killing it, O'Brien went, to visit his pony. It was already under the hands of the *baccah*, who acted as groom in the stable-yard of the O'Flaherty Arms; and it was surrounded by some of those loungers, who are always to be found in the inn yards of Ireland. They were all considering the pony with curiosity and admiration.

„It isn't for nothing you bought the gapul, plaze your honour?" said the baccah, as O'Brien examined one of her feet.

„Do you think her of value?" asked the owner.

„Do I, is it, Sir? — troth, I surely do," was the baccah's reply, as he rubbed down the sides of the little animal with renewed vigour; „she'll bring her own price any day, in fair or market, in Galway county or out of it. I'll ingage it's herself carried you well over rock and rathe, bog and mountain; for she's as cute as ever a baste in the barony."

„You know her, then?" said O'Brien.

„Know her! It's few but knows *gapul na phouka;** sure she's of the Shulah's breakin," he added, turning to the loungers.

---

* The fairy's pony.

„Then," said one of them, „it's herself's the *luibin* * of a gapul; for it was his father before him had the notes for making a cute cratur of a Connemara pony."

„Why, then;" said another, „it's a pity but it's himself he would break in, instead of the gapuls; for a wilder poor cratur doesn't breathe the breath of life this day. There be some wud tell you he's a fairy man, and others wud be saying he's the *arrach* of Shane-na-Brien: ay, by my conscience, or Shane himself, who was hanged for the murther at St Michael's Crass; — Christ save us, and bless the mark."

„I never seed the Shulah but oncet," said the baccah, „and that was Lammas day, 'bove all the days of the year, in the mountains of Moycullen. And it was himself was taking that very pony, quiet as she stands there, down to the wood of Dim, on Lough Corrib, where the horse-dailers lays the price for the ponies; he breaks on the *Claghan-na-tomparagh*,** and finds his bargain there the next day: for the Shulah will not put his *comhluadar*** upon any man, barring it's a priest, a friar, or a nun. And I'll ingage a good bargain it is; for a garlah in the cradle might deal with the Shulah, ay, indeed. So they say none ever saw the

---

* Cunning, crafty one.
** The stone of the pirates.
*** „Company."

Shulah in town, or townland, which is mighty wonderful; only in respect of the great penance and sore sin upon his poor soul; for, do you mind, meet him where you will by night or day, by Luib or Lough, it's telling his padreens he'll be, and going over his decades, and the seven penitentials."

O'Brien now perceiving that his steed was in good hands, and had all that prepossession in her favour which is through life so serviceable to man or beast, left him to the baccah; convinced that Gapul-na-phouka was a pupil of Shane's, who, it appeared, supported his wild existence, by breaking in those mountain horses, which, like himself, were indigenous to the regions, where alone the breed of ponies and of Shulah men were still extant.

The suspicion of who Shane was, the confidence placed in his probity, the indisposition of the common people to profit by their suspicion, and receive the reward for his apprehension, afforded O'Brien food for meditation, no less than Shane's mysterious conduct towards himself. The fidelity to his pecuniary engagements, in his strange commerce with the horse dealers, was nothing new or peculiar. In the midst of the most lawless burnings and destruction of property, the genuine Irish peasant is scrupulously honest in his intercourse with his neighbours: and O'Brien's heart bore ample testimony that the virtue was

not solitary in his foster-brother. He knew him to be brave, persevering in action, and enduring of privation, faithful to death in his attachments, an affectionate son, an incorruptible follower, with a heart that beat with a rude, but impulsive sympathy for the sufferings of others, and glowed with a genuine, though ill understood love of country. Yet is this man (he thought), a murderer, an outlaw, ready for every violence, — his hand armed against civilization, as civilization is armed against him, — and the whole tenor of his life at variance with the best interest of society! The world may make its conventional virtues and vices, and civil associations may dictate forms, but the source of good is in the feelings and affections of the animal. Even when bad government, or the undue pressure of ill-arranged externals, turns them the most irresistibly aside from their natural career, and enforces a disordered reaction, their principle itself remains unchanged; and the man thus situated makes for himself a code of compensating morality, which fits him for the peculiar circumstances of his untoward and difficult position.

In the midst of such reflections, intermixed with musing on Shane's perpetual watchfulness over his foster-brother's safety, and his inexplicable unwillingness to encounter him, even in the security and remoteness of the moun-

tain fastnesses, the supper appeared; which his landlord set before him with a flask of claret (then, for reasons unassigned by the venders, so cheap and so genuine in the county of Galway), and a county newspaper. In glancing his eye over the stale intelligence of this provincial journal, towards the end of his repast, O'Brien was caught by the appearance of his own name in a conspicuous column. He read as follows: —

„Died, on the first of June, at the retreat of the religious gentlemen of Cong, the Right Hon. Terentius O'Brien Lord Arranmore, the lineal descendant and representative of the Clan Tieg O'Briens, Princes of the Isles of Arran. His lordship was distinguished for his patriotism and loyalty, and, above all, for his great antiquarian lore, and for the efforts he had made to revive the literature of his country, as it existed in those times, when, if a learned man was missing from Europe, it was said, *amandatus est in Hiberniam.*

„His Lordship having in his early childhood been seduced to abandon the religion of his fathers, he returned to it in mature life, from a sincere conviction; and bent on ending his days in the odour of sanctity, he retired from the world, and became a member of the confraternity of religious gentlemen of Cong. His remains were conveyed to the great Isle of Arran with a pomp suitable to his rank, and

were attended to the water's edge by the greatest concourse of persons ever assembled in this province upon a similar occasion, since the funeral obsequies of great Lord Clanrickard.

„His Lordship is succeeded in his titles and estates by his only son, the Hon. Murrogh O'Brien, grand nephew of the celebrated Abbé Don Ignatius O'Brien (secretary of the college of the Propaganda of Rome), great great nephew of Field Marshal *Count* Taaf, of the Mac Taafs of Jar Connaught, and nephew to the Misses Mac Taaf, of Bog Moy House, in the county of Galway, and Ballyslattery, in the county Mayo.

„His Lordship has served with distinction in the armies of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of Germany; to which service it is supposed he will return, having settled his affairs in this country. His Lordship is in his twenty-fifth year and unmarried. His presumptive heir is Turlogh Giol O'Brien, Esq. of the Isles of Arran."

O'Brien read this paragraph with a moisture in his eyes that obscured their vision, and with a smile occasionally curling his lips, that indicated his opinion of this purely *Irish* exhibition of pride in all its hyperbole. The pompous announce of titles and estates sounded in his ear like a mockery. The lordly appellation was, indeed, not new to him; for the polite and punctilious inmates of the Retreat

had not failed to give him, in conversation, all the additions to which they attached so much consequence: neither was he wholly insensible to the possession of a title, respectable for its antiquity in the eyes of the world. He had, however, hesitated on its assumption, under the total ruin of his fortunes, and the consequent necessity of earning his bread; nor was he wholly uninfluenced by an abstract contempt for aristocratic distinctions, which formed part of his philosophy, without entirely destroying the prejudices of early education; but, on more mature reflection, he changed his mind, and determined not to abandon his only possession—a possession which had caused his father the sacrifice of his independent fortune. The title was his right; and though unsupported by wealth, was still a barrier between him and that neglect, for which he was not yet prepared; while, by raising him above the mass, he believed it would inevitably increase the utility of those efforts, which he was more than ever determined to make for the civil and religious liberties of his countrymen.

END OF VOL. III.

To be had by every bookseller:

The English Fireside upon the banks of the Rhine. An almanack for the year 1829. Exhibiting a choice of English and German tales, poems and historical anecdotes, selected by J. Hedman, master of arts. Adorned with superb engravings.

Price: In boards fl. 4. — Thlr. 2. 8 gr.

BSB Bayerische StaatsBibliothek
MDZ Münchener DigitalisierungsZentrum Digitale Bibliothek

Morgan, Sydney,

The O'Briens and the O'Flahertys a national tale ; in four volumes

Bd.: 3

Heidelberg 1828
P.o.angl. 249 hc-3
urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10747834-5